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Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

Eritrean Coverage of Conflict Over Islands

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For further reportage of the Eritrean-Yemeni confrontation over the Hanish Islands in the Red Sea, including official Eritrean Foreign Ministry statements, please see the East Africa section of the Sub-Saharan Africa DAILY REPORT.

Yemeni, Eritrean Forces Exchange Gunfire

NC2612162995 Paris AFP in English
1554 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 26 (AFP) — Yemeni and Eritrean forces exchanged fire early Tuesday [26 December] near one of three disputed Red Sea islands, diplomats here said.

They said two Eritrean military boats were repulsed by Yemeni forces stationed on the isle of Zogar, 17 kilometres (11 miles) north of the island of Hanish al-Kabir (Greater Hanish), which was captured by Eritrea on December 18.

The diplomats, who gave no details on any casualties, said Yemeni forces prevented the two ships from landing on the island.

Eritrean President Isias Afworki indicated on Tuesday, during a telephone call with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, that there had been no clashes in the past two days.

Yemeni Official: Situation 'Quiet', Diplomacy 'Active'

JN2512154995 Amman Radio Jordan Network
in Arabic 1200 GMT 25 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with Ghalib 'Ali Jamil, Yemeni Foreign Ministry under secretary, by unidentified correspondent in the studio on 25 December; place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Begin Jamil recording] In fact, there are no new developments with respect to the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute at the present time. The situation on the ground is quiet. Now, diplomacy is active and Yemeni, Arab, and Eritrean diplomacy is active in searching for a way out of this crisis, to resort to dialogue and bilateral negotiations, and to defuse the sedition brought about by Eritrea. There are positive signs from the Eritrean side that Eritrea will release the prisoners. We expect their return to the homeland either today or tomorrow. There are also positive signs as a result of contacts by third parties like Ethiopia and Egypt. Matters are getting better every day. This is what we want. We want a withdrawal from the island, the return of the prisoners, then holding negotiations on all the sea borders between us and Eritrea. [passage omitted]

Troops Said Able To Recapture Island in 'Hours'

NC2512084995 Cairo MENA in English
0800 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 25 (MENA)—A Yemeni political source said that Yemen's prudence and restraint regarding Eritrea's occupation of the Yemeni island of al-Hanish do not reflect powerlessness or disability but rather reflect a Yemeni principled policy towards all border problems.

He added that Yemen believes in the principle of dialogue and solving of bilateral problems through negotiations. The source told "14 UKTUBAR" newspaper the Yemeni Armed Forces are capable of retrieving the island within hours and transferring the entire battle into the Eritrean capital of Asmara.

The source did not rule out that Yemen would resort to this last option in case Eritrea did not respond to the Yemeni, Arab, and international demands to withdraw Eritrean troops from the island.

Yemen Said To Welcome Ethiopian Mediation

JN2212205995 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network
in Arabic 2000 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Answering a question by the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', on the Yemeni Republic's stand on the continuing Eritrean invasion of al-Hanish al-Kabir Island, an official source said that our country prefers adhering to the option of dialogue and of seeking peaceful means to resolve the problem caused by the Eritrean aggression, as well as to settle any dispute over Yemeni-Eritrean sea borders. In response to appeals by several brothers and friends to avoid taking any action that would escalate the situation, Yemen refuses to resort to force. In addition, Yemen's political leadership has always been careful not to react emotionally to any event or aggression, the official source added. The source noted that, based on this, Yemen has been careful to exercise wisdom in facing this aggression because of its awareness of the responsibilities of the Yemeni Republic as a member state in the international community and out of its concern for security and stability in the region and for world peace.

Asked about Yemen's stand on Ethiopian mediation in light of Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin's visit yesterday, the official source said: The Yemeni

Republic thanks His Excellency the Ethiopian prime minister Meles Zenawi for his initiative, and appreciates his good offices and efforts to settle the dispute resulting from the sudden attack by Eritrean forces on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

The source said: While stressing our country's eagerness to respond to and cooperate with Ethiopian mediation, we wish it success in defusing this crisis, which was created by the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir last Friday, 15 December, and in finding a just settlement allowing the Yemeni Republic and Eritrea to resume their talks on sea borders, ensuring the legitimate and legal rights of both countries.

Ethiopia's Seyoum Begins Mediation Effort

Arrives in Sanaa

JN2412122795 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1055 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, 25 Dec (INA)—Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin arrived in Sanaa today on a visit to follow up on mediation efforts by the Ethiopian Government to resolve the differences following the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. Upon arrival in Sanaa, the Ethiopian minister said he would brief Yemeni officials on the latest efforts to arrive at a peaceful resolution of the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute, asserting that there is positive development in this regard.

Meets With President Salih

JN2412124995 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, the president of the republic, today received Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin. He conveyed to the president a message from Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The message is related to Ethiopian mediation efforts to resolve the differences between our country and Eritrea, which resulted from the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. The message also relates to Ethiopia's interest in resolving these differences in a peaceful way on the basis of the good neighborly ties it has with both our country and Eritrea.

The brother president reaffirmed his welcome of the mediation efforts exerted by Ethiopia and by the brothers in Egypt to resolve differences between our country and Eritrea. He said he hopes these efforts will succeed.

He stresses our country's firm position, which rejects the use of force and advocates dialogue to resolve differences in a way that will ensure the return of things to what they were before 15 December 1995. The Yemeni position also advocates negotiations over the sea borders between the two neighboring states on the basis of the international agreements and laws that guarantee legitimate rights.

The meeting was attended by Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, the deputy prime minister and the foreign minister, and the Ethiopian charge d'affaires.

Voices 'Optimism' Over Dispute

NC2412104895 Paris AFP in English
1018 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 24 (AFP)—Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin voiced optimism Sunday [24 December] on a return visit to Yemen following talks in Eritrea aimed at finding a solution to their conflict over a Red Sea island.

He told the official agency SABA there had been "positive developments," adding he "would inform the Yemeni government of the latest efforts taken by Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zinawi to resolve the conflict peacefully."

He was speaking as he returned to Sanaa, for a second visit in his mediation bid after first holding talks in the Yemeni capital on Thursday.

Yemeni foreign ministry officials here said that he had afterwards travelled to Eritrea for talks.

He met Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih Sunday to brief him on Eritrea's response to an Ethiopian plan to resolve the conflict, an official told AFP.

In a conciliatory gesture, Asmara said Saturday it would release 195 Yemeni soldiers taken prisoner during a battle for the disputed island of Hanish al-Kabir, meeting one of Yemen's conditions for the opening of talks.

Eritrean forces captured the island last Monday after a three-day battle in which nine soldiers were killed.

Yemen has demanded the release of prisoners and the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Hanish al-Kabir ahead of any negotiations on the status of the strategic island.

According to Sunday's edition of the YEMEN TIMES, Mesfin has proposed a three-point plan involving the release of Yemeni prisoners to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the evacuation of the Hanish archipelago by both sides and arbitration by the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

The United States was backing the plan, the daily said.

Al-Hanish al-Kabir, which lies halfway between the Yemeni and Eritrean coastlines, was formerly owned by the Ottoman empire and its status has never been determined by international convention.

It is strategically important as it controls access to the Bab al-Mandab straits between the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Urges Dialogue, Departs

JN2412132695 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin left Sanaa at noon today, concluding a brief visit to our country lasting several hours.

During the visit, he met with brother Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and briefed him on the latest efforts of the Ethiopian Government to achieve a peaceful resolution of the situation following the Eritrean attack on the Yemeni island of al- Hanish al-Kabir.

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', the Ethiopian minister voiced deep satisfaction with the good results of this visit and with his meeting with brother Lt. Gen. President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih.

He pointed out that circumstances are very opportune to finding a peaceful resolution of the current problem. In this regard, he expressed his deep belief that a solution will be attained very soon. He also stressed his determination to proceed on this peaceful path. He said there is no other alternative to resolving this problem but the path of peace and dialogue.

Concluding his statement, he voiced his thanks and appreciation to the Yemeni leadership and government for the measures and positions they have taken on this issue.

He was seen off by brother Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; brother Ambassador Ghalib al- 'Afifi, head of the Foreign Ministry's Protocol Department; Marwan 'Abdallah Nu'man, head of the Africa Department; and his excellency the Ethiopian charge d'affaires in Sanaa.

Seyoum's Efforts, Prisoner Release Viewed

NC2412143595 Paris AFP in English 1350 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 24 (AFP)—Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin said on Sunday [24 December] he expected a "quick resolution" to the conflict between Yemen and Eritrea over a Red Sea island, following talks to find a solution to the crisis.

Mesfin, who is mediating between the two countries, told the official news agency SABA' that the "situation is ripe for a peaceful solution to the conflict, which can only be resolved through dialogue."

He made the comments after meeting Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih to brief him on Eritrea's response to an Ethiopian plan to resolve the conflict, an official told AFP.

Before he left Yemen, Mesfin said he "deeply believed a quick resolution" to the conflict would be reached.

He was speaking during his second visit to Yemen in his mediation bid after first holding talks in the Yemeni capital on Thursday. Yemeni foreign ministry officials here said that Mesfin had also travelled to Eritrea for talks, but the SABA' news agency did not indicate whether he would return there.

In a conciliatory gesture, Eritrea said Sunday it had contacted the International Committee of the Red Cross to coordinate the release of 195 Yemeni soldiers taken prisoner during a battle for the disputed island of Hanish al-Kabir.

This meets one of Yemen's conditions for the opening of talks after Eritrean forces captured the island on December 18 after a three-day battle in which nine soldiers were killed.

Yemen has demanded the release of prisoners and the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from al-Hanish al-Kabir ahead of any negotiations on the status of the strategic island.

Jean-Francois Sangsue, a ICRC official, told AFP in Asmara that he had arrived the Eritrean capital from Addis Ababa to oversee the prisoner transfer.

"We have offered our services. I am here to confirm the offer by the Eritrean authorities to free the prisoners," Sangsue said. "It is too early to enter into the details."

Yemen's deputy prime minister, 'Abd-al Wahab al-Ansi, said during a visit to Qatar that his government would prefer to resolve the territorial conflict in bilateral negotiations and not take the case before the International Court of Justice.

He told the official Qatari News Agency that bringing the issue before the court in The Hague would be a "long" process.

"We want to resolve the problem through bilateral negotiations, and if we don't achieve this, we can then turn to international justice," said al-Ansi, who also stressed the "need for cooperation between the two countries."

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The United States was backing the plan, the daily said.

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President Salih Discusses Latest Developments

JN2412202395 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih by unidentified BBC Arabic Service correspondent on 23 December; place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Brother President, as you are aware, we and the Arab and international media are following up the developments of the dispute between Yemen and Eritrea on al-Hanish al-Kabir island. Can you, Mr. President, give us in this interview the latest developments and the Yemeni perspective at this point in time?

[Salih] With regard to the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir, which was attacked by the Eritrean brothers on Friday [15 December], I would like to say that the attack was unexpected, particularly since Eritrea is a neighboring and friendly country bound to Yemen by strong historical ties that are beneficial to both countries. Yemen, among other countries in the region, constituted the strategic depth for the Eritrean revolution. Hence, we were nearly certain that regardless of the dispute over the islands or sea borders, there would be no blatant aggression on the island of al-Hanish. Nonetheless, this aggression took place, and they captured 200-205 soldiers who formed a small garrison on the island. They had only their personal weapons with them. When the situation was still ambiguous on the island, and when there was fighting between the garrison personnel and the Eritrean navy, which was inherited from the Mengistu Haile Mariam regime, there was communication with President Isais Afwerki at the behest of the U.S. Administration. We were encouraged to resolve the problem through bilateral contacts. Hence, we responded favorably to this. Meanwhile, the situation was ambiguous. We confirmed our acceptance of the cease-fire agreement which we reached with Afwerki. At that time the clash was still going on. By that time the island had fallen into the hands of the Eritrean aggressors.

We ordered a cease-fire to avoid further bloodshed between us and Eritrea. We implemented the cease-fire on our part and did not carry out any military operations, naval or aerial, on the al-Hanish island or any Eritrean area, out of our desire to have a peaceful solution within a bilateral dialogue. However, the Eritrean regime procrastinated on the evacuation of the island and the release of those detained.

Then there was mediation by Ethiopia. We received an Ethiopian envoy, the foreign minister, with a message from Meles Zenawi. We welcomed this mediation on the basis of their handing over the POW's and evacuating the island, after which there would be a dialogue on the demarcation of sea borders between us and Eritrea on the basis of bilateral dialogue, arbitration, and resorting eventually to the International Court of Justice.

They had their own conditions. From the outset of the talks between us, they wanted to resort to the International Court of Justice straightaway. We said we accept the International Court of Justice, but let us try bilateral dialogue first, through which we may be able to achieve a solution, and then arbitration. They, however, insisted on one point, going to the International Court of Justice. Yemen has always shouldered its responsibility for security and the safety of shipping in the Red Sea. It has not stepped up the military situation in any way. Yemen pursues political dialogue. It also adheres to its legal right to the island, waters, and sea borders with Eritrea. It adheres to its legal right, and it prefers not to resort to force, but to dialogue within the framework of the new world order, which denounces the occupation of others' territory by force. Yemen believes that dialogue is the best way.

[Correspondent] Brother President: You of course know that there have been some mediation efforts. We know that the UN secretary general will visit Yemen. We also know that Syrian- Egyptian-Saudi talks are going on now in Cairo. What do you expect from these mediations, and how will you deal with them? What are the demands Yemen will communicate to these Arab brothers, who are seeking to mediate in the matter?

[Salih] From our viewpoint, the solution should be bilateral. Having said that, we welcome the mediation efforts by Ethiopia, Egypt, and the UN secretary general. We welcome any efforts for a peaceful solution, which means that we do not need to create fresh hotbeds of tension in the region. The region has emerged from a war, and we have emerged from war. We have an option—that, is dialogue, while sticking to Yemen's right to its waters and islands.

[Correspondent] Brother President: Are you satisfied with the Arab position and that of the Arab League now?

[Salih] The Arab League's position is very excellent and positive. We expect a stronger Arab position within the context of the diplomatic action to resolve the problem and the crisis between us and Eritrea.

[Correspondent] Also, Brother President, there was a report this morning that the Eritrean president offered to hand over the Yemeni hostages to the International Committee of the Red Cross. Does this mean that the crisis is nearing a solution through this offer?

[Salih] Handing over the detainees is the beginning of a solution, and a step toward calming things down. It will enable us to start discussing the other alternatives. If that step really takes place, then it marks a positive move toward a peaceful solution.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, Eritrea says that the bilateral solution should be based on mutual withdrawal by Yemeni and Eritrean troops from the island. Do you agree to this Eritrean demand?

[Salih] Our view is that the aggressor must withdraw, and that the situation must return to what it was like before the Friday incidents. However, if there is a vigorous positive mediation effort, we will welcome it. We will let the mediator determine his conditions. We will not complicate matters. If any mediator has satisfactory and convincing solutions, we will accept them.

[Correspondent] Finally, Mr. President, at the outset of the crisis the media probably exaggerated in reporting the number of those killed and the type of military operations that were carried out. After the end of this crisis, it was clear that the number of those killed was very small. We now know that in Eritrea, there are 12 people who were killed and buried. Mr. President, how do you explain this exaggeration in this operation and what is the result of this crisis in the final analysis?

[Salih] We believe that there are motives behind shaking up the security of shipping in the Red Sea. There are external motives. However, we are not seeking to be driven by them, and we hope that all countries in the region will not be driven by them. We hope that everyone will opt for peaceful solutions that are satisfactory to all parties.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, at the end of this interview, would you like to say anything else, perhaps, to Arab public opinion or to the Arab listeners which deals with this stand on the crisis?

[Salih] We call on Arab countries and the international community to condemn such behavior and adventures and attacks, regardless of their nature, because this is something that is unacceptable. No one accepts such behavior. Therefore, we hope that the international community will adopt a responsible stand as it has with many issues in the context of changes and new developments and within the framework of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, I wanted to take this opportunity to ask you about Saudi Arabia's stand during the crisis [words indistinct]. What is your comment on this? We also noticed a Saudi reaction in support for Yemen, which, frankly, is an honorable Arab stand. Do you see this stand [words indistinct]?

[Salih] We support the same opinion you have given. We are satisfied with the stand.

[Correspondent] Has [words indistinct] in Saudi Arabia?

[Salih] Has what?

[Correspondent] Are there any Yemeni special demands from the brothers in the Gulf as a whole related to this dispute?

[Salih] We believe that the islands are important to the people of the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf as well as to the Arab nation, in general.

[Correspondent] At the end of this interview, I would like to thank you very much.

[Salih] Thank you very much.

Further Remarks by Salih

NC2512074695 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 25 Dec 95

[Telephone Interview with Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, in Sanaa, by Shihatah Abu-al-Majd, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-al-Majd] Eritrea has occupied Jazirat Hanish al-Kabir, which is under Yemeni sovereignty. This has caused further tension south of the Red Sea and affected relations between the two countries and peoples. We have the Yemeni president on the phone from Sanaa, His Excellency Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih. Welcome, Mr. President, to the Voice of the Arabs.

[Salih] Thank you.

[Abu-al-Majd] How far have efforts gone toward solving the problem with Eritrea over the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir?

[Salih] The brothers in Egypt and Ethiopia are trying to solve the problem peacefully. We have welcomed the mediation and efforts initiated by Egypt and Ethiopia.

[Abu-al-Majd] Are the Eritrean forces still occupying the island?

[Salih] Yes. The Eritrean forces remain on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

[Abu-al-Majd] And what is the position of the Yemeni forces so far?

[Salih] The Yemeni Government is convinced of the value of peaceful solutions. It believes a peaceful solution is the best way out of this predicament.

[Abu-al-Majd] And what steps have been taken toward finding a peaceful solution? Will you resort to the International Court of Justice or the UN?

[Salih] We have told the mediators, Egypt, Ethiopia, and those who talk to us, that a solution should be found through mutual dialogue. If that fails, it should be found by arbitration and if that fails, we should go to the International Court of Justice.

[Abu-al-Majd] In a few days UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali will be with you. What will Yemen tell him about the problem of al- Hanish al-Kabir?

[Salih] We demand that all traces of aggression are removed from the island as well as all the consequences of this aggression. The Eritrean aggression on the island of al-Hanish must end. This is what we will tell the secretary general.

[Abu-al-Majd] Do you seek only the departure of the Eritrean troops or do you also want a final solution to the border issue? How could this be done so that the Red Sea might be secure?

[Salih] First, the aggression must end, then we can sit at the negotiating table and resolve the issue peacefully in accordance with international law and the legitimate rights of the two countries. The Red Sea cannot tolerate a conflict or crisis such as this.

[Abu-al-Majd] You have sent envoys to several Arab countries. You have also received envoys from Arab and African countries. You received an envoy from Egypt and another from Ethiopia, who also met the Eritrean president. How far has the Egyptian-Ethiopian mediation gone?

[Salih] The solutions will take shape through the mediators. We welcome and encourage mediation to find peaceful solutions.

[Abu-al-Majd] What is the basis or the framework of the mediation?

[Salih] In light of the brutal aggression on the island, Yemen preserves its historical and legal right and demands the elimination of the traces of the aggression of Friday [15 December] against al- Hanish Island.

[Abu-al-Majd] Have the Egyptian or Ethiopian envoys told you anything new regarding Eritrea's agreement to resolve the issue according to Yemen's wishes or according to international law?

[Salih] They have come to explore the Yemeni and Eritrean views. Based on these views, the mediators can work out the solutions. They have not brought a solution; they came to explore the views of Yemen and Eritrea. Based on these views, the mediators will work out the solutions.

[Abu-al-Majd] Could things reach a military solution on your part, in the same way Eritrea moved?

[Salih] We hope we will not resort to a military solution. We believe in dialogue. We are advocates of peace, not war.

[Abu-al-Majd] Your Excellency, you say you advocate peace and at the same time you emphasize that al-Hanish is a Yemeni island. How can a compromise between these two be found?

[Salih] I believe the Arab and international public does not approve of aggression or the occupation of others' territories by force.

[Abu-al-Majd] Do you believe a political solution can be found soon?

[Salih] I believe a solution depends on the efforts of the mediators, and we hope it will be found as soon as possible. We hope we will resort only to the peaceful solution.

[Abu-al-Majd] What if these efforts fail to find a peaceful solution? What would Yemen's position be then?

[Salih] We will preserve our legitimate right.

[Abu-al-Majd] Using any means?

[Salih] Using any means.

[Abu-al-Majd] Is there any mediation other than the Egyptian and Ethiopian mediation?

[Salih] So far, no.

[Abu-Al-Majd] Do you expect broader mediation by the Arab League or the OAU?

[Salih] We hope the Egyptian and Ethiopian mediation succeeds and is adequate. Should the need arise, the issue will be submitted to the Arab League, the UN, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and the OAU.

[Abu-al-Majd] Eritrea has stated that it will release the Yemeni prisoners it holds. How many are they?

[Salih] Approximately 195 and three martyrs.

[Abu-al-Majd] Has Eritrea released them?

[Salih] They informed us they would turn them over to the Red Cross, which has already gone to Eritrea to make preparations to receive them in the next few days.

[Abu-al-Majd] Do you view this as a gesture toward a peaceful solution?

[Salih] We consider it a constructive step toward a peaceful solution.

[Abu-al-Majd] What is the basis of the Yemeni solution in your view?

[Salih] We want a solution according to international law.

[Abu-al-Majd] Mr. President, permit me to move to another topic and to discuss Egyptian-Yemeni relations. How do you view these relations?

[Salih] Egyptian-Yemeni relations are warm and deep-rooted.

[Abu-al-Majd] What about Yemeni-Saudi relations?

[Salih] They are excellent and developing. All the stains have been removed, thanks to the constant dialogue between us and our brothers in Saudi Arabia.

[Abu-al-Majd] Should we expect a border agreement between you and Saudi Arabia soon?

[Salih] God willing. The joint committees are working out the solutions. When the issue reaches the two leaderships, it will be decided upon.

[Abu-al-Majd] Will you visit Saudi Arabia soon for this purpose?

[Salih] I visited this year. Visits are always possible. God willing, when the committees conclude their work, a meeting might be held to sign the final agreement.

[Abu-al-Majd] Do you expect a visit by any senior Saudi official?

[Salih] We always exchange visits and the [Saudi] brothers say they will visit Yemen next year, God willing.

[Abu-al-Majd] What is Yemen's role in Arab reconciliation and what are your expectations in this regard in 1996?

[Salih] We hope the Arab nation will overcome the frustration resulting from the differences and from the aftermath of the Gulf war, which resulted in misunderstanding. We hope that next year inter-Arab relations will develop to serve the interests of our countries.

[Abu-al-Majd] What do you hope for Yemen and the Arab world in the new year?

[Salih] We hope we will close the chapter of 1995 with all its negative aspects and welcome a new year full of positive things for the Arab nation.

[Abu-al-Majd] Thank you, Mr. President. Our best wishes for Yemen and His Excellency the President.

[Salih] Thank you very much.

Yemen Foreign Minister on Withdrawal of Eritreans

NC2512222695 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2125 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 25 Dec (MENA)—'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Yemeni deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has said that the Eritrean forces will soon be evacuated from Hanish al-Kabir and that the situation will return to what it was before the island was occupied in mid-December.

In a statement to AL-AHRAM to be published tomorrow [26 December], al-Iryani says the island's fate will be determined within the context of international law, the Law of the Sea agreement, and the legal and historical documents possessed by Yemen.

He explained that the Egyptian and Ethiopian mediation was 70-percent successful in reaching a peaceful solution. He said when Yemen's conditions are met, Yemen and Eritrea will resume their bilateral negotiations. The most important condition, he said, is the release of the Yemeni prisoners in the island—something that will be done through the International Committee of the Red Cross in the next few hours.

The Yemeni foreign minister stressed that his country will not be dragged into other hotbeds of protracted conflict. Therefore, he added, the timeframe for resolving the conflict with Eritrea over territorial waters and sovereignty over the islands is not indefinite. He said the Yemeni public are boiling with anger over this Eritrean act, which was committed by friends and kin, making it more painful.

The Yemeni official called on the United States to play the role of arbiter in the crisis. He said all U.S. maps and documents prove that the islands of Hanish al-Kabir, Hanish al-Saghir, and Zuqar belong to Yemen.

He stressed that the Eritrean invasion of the Yemeni islands shocked Arab-Eritrean relations and raised questions and doubts for the Arabs. He said the invasion, in its strategic dimension, showed ambitions that no country on the western shore of the Red Sea other than Eritrea has explicitly shown. All countries concerned with the Red Sea must therefore make new calculations, he said.

Eritrea would definitely have not invaded the island if it had not enjoyed the backing of other foreign sides, al-Iryani said. So far, the backers of Eritrea have not become publicly known, he added.

Salih Receives Mubarak's Message on Dispute

NC2412074795 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih has received a message from President Husni Mubarak on the dispute between Eritrea and Yemen over the al-Hanish al-Kabir Island. The Yemeni president received the message when he met a high-level Egyptian delegation that arrived in Sanaa from Asmara yesterday.

The Yemeni president said he welcomes President Mubarak's initiative to resolve the differences between Yemen and Eritrea, adding that it was a beneficial move, one we hope will succeed. He added that Egypt enjoys great standing among the Yemeni people and the Arab nation and has an important regional and international role. President Salih asked the Egyptian envoy to convey his greetings and appreciation to President Mubarak and the Egyptian people.

Major General 'Umar Sulayman, who is leading the Egyptian delegation, said he visited Asmara and Sanaa as an envoy of President Husni Mubarak, fulfilling an Egyptian initiative to mediate between Yemen and Eritrea. He added that he conveyed a message from President Husni Mubarak to Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih in this connection. The Egyptian envoy emphasized that Egypt is intent on exerting every possible effort to contain the dispute between the two countries, bring their views closer, and establish a framework between the two sides to end the dispute over the al-Hanish al-Kabir Island.

The Egyptian delegation left Sanaa last night after a two-hour visit.

Salih, Egypt's Mubarak Discuss Island Conflict

JN2512072695 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A telephone conversation took place yesterday evening between President Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and his brother President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt. The two leaders exchanged views on the latest developments in the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir, and the efforts of the Egyptian brothers to contain the dispute with Eritrea in a manner that will resolve it peacefully and return the situation to what it was before 15 December.

The brother president once again welcomed the good offices of the Egyptian brothers and wished them success. He reiterated our country's adherence to a peaceful approach toward resolving the dispute with Eritrea over sea borders on the basis of compliance with international law and conventions in order to reinforce security, stability, and peace in the Red Sea region.

'Abd-al-Ghani: Saudi Arabia Supports Yemen Stand

JN2312210995 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani returned to Sanaa this evening from sisterly Saudi Arabia at the end of a short visit to Riyadh during which he met with His Highness Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation and inspector-general in sisterly Saudi Arabia.

During the meeting, he conveyed a message from brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic, to his brother King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, dealing with developments resulting from the continuation of the treacherous Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir island, in addition to issues of concern to the two fraternal countries. [passage omitted]

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA' upon his return, the prime minister said: We explained to the brothers in fraternal Saudi Arabia latest developments resulting from the continuation of the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni Hanish al-Kabir and our commitment to dialogue and peaceful means to solve the problem resulting from the Eritrean aggression, to settle any disagreement on the Yemeni-Eritrean maritime borders, and to call for the departure of the aggressive forces from Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir island.

The prime minister added: We found that the brothers in Saudi Arabia appreciate this responsible position by the Republic of Yemen, and expressed their rejection of the occupation of Yemeni al- Hanish al-Kabir island by the Eritrean forces and their support for a peaceful solution to this problem.

Abd-al-Rahman, Russian Envoy Discuss Dispute

JN2412130295 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Prime Minister 'Abduh 'Ali 'Abd-al- Rahman received today Nikolay [Tilivkov], ambassador of the Russian Federation to our country. Discussions centered on the Eritrean acts of aggression against the Yemeni island of Hanish al-Kabir, as well as on friendly bilateral relations.

During the meeting, the deputy foreign minister expressed our country's gratitude for the Russian Federation's efforts to resolve the crisis resulting from the aggression to which our country has been subjected.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arabsat To Launch Second-Generation Satellites

LD2212172295 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] After four days of talks, the 76th meeting of the board of directors of the Arab Satellite Communications Organization, Arabsat, concluded in Rabat today.

Arabsat board of directors, which includes Saudi Arabia, the Libyan Jamahiriyah, the UAE [United Arab Emirates], Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Qatar, Kuwait and Morocco, examined the reports of the Arabsat director general and its controller. It also studied Arabsat financial situation and the draft budget for 1996. Also, the project of launching Arabsat second generation of satellites was examined.

The chairman of Arabsat board of directors, Muhammad Sa'd 'al-Shihri, said the following on the resolutions and recommendations which had been adopted by the Arabsat board of directors 76th meeting:

[Begin Shihri recording] The most important outcome of the board's 76th meeting was its approval of the 1996 budget and its agreement on the need to go ahead with the launch of the first of the second generation satellites on time in July 1996 as this will be an important new lease of life for of the organization.

Also, among the other important decisions was the agreement to bring forward the date of the launch of the second of the second generation satellites in December 1997.

Furthermore, it was also decided to allow Arabsat's director-general and management to go ahead with the necessary studies to build the third of second generation satellites.

These measures will give a fresh lease of life to this young organization which has now acquired an international standing in the field of space.

Furthermore, all Arab countries' needs for their telephone and television services or any other needs will be taken into consideration within the Arabsat framework. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 15 Dec

NC2112050895

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 15 December edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Editor Defends Paper's Position on U.S. Election Criticism
2. Sunday Edition To Stop
3. Shukri Says Government Fooling Itself on Elections
4. 'Adil Husayn Views Bid To Hold New Elections
5. Independent Deputy Joins Labor Party
6. Human Rights Center Views Election Irregularities
7. Writers Views Repercussions of Israeli-U.S. Pact
8. Former U.S. Diplomat Interviewed on Converting to Islam

EDITOR DEFENDS PAPER'S POSITION ON U.S. ELECTION CRITICISM

In an approximately 2,500-word article by the "political editor" on page 1, the paper responds to angry reaction by the Egyptian Government and press to reports citing the U.S. Administration's "concern" over alleged "excesses" in the Egyptian parliamentary elections held on 29 November and 6 December. The editor notes that AL-SHA'B received a "response" from the "Media Office" of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo denying reports by AL-SHA'B and other papers regarding a "protest" by the U.S. Embassy over the outcome of the Egyptian elections. The editor notes that the government media used the U.S. "response" to claim the fairness of the elections and to question the "credibility" of AL-SHA'B. The editor notes that part of AL-SHA'B's "media message" is to publish news and reports without necessarily analyzing them or expressing its opinion on them. In this regard, the editor adds, the reports published by the newspaper in several issues show that a "diplomatic crisis" has emerged between the Egyptian Government and U.S. Administration over the elections, as proven by U.S. media reports as well as two separate comments by the U.S. State Department following the first and second round of elections. After publishing the "text" of the two comments, the editor notes that any "sane" person would realize from these comments that the U.S. Administration has "basic observations" on the election process and expects President Mubarak to investigate election irregularities. This, he adds, shows that the U.S. Government has expressed its "concern" over the elections, which has created a "kind of tension" or "crisis" in bilateral relations. The editor adds that according to newspapers, the Egyptian Government received messages before the elections from the U.S. Senate as well as Congress' Foreign Relations Committee expressing its "disturbance" over the election campaign. Congress' message urged the use of "nonpartisan observers to ensure the fairness of the elections," particularly since Congress is "extremely disturbed" by the Egyptian Government reaction to the formation of an Egyptian committee to monitor the elections. The editor adds that U.S. and European televisions reported that the elections were raised during a meeting between Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and the U.S. ambassador in Cairo. And U.S. official Dennis Ross told a news conference after meeting President Mubarak that he discussed the election issue with the president. Noting the U.S. ambassador's denial of a protest, the editor adds: "We understand the circumstances surrounding the denial of the U.S. ambassador," since U.S. State Department officials "abide by" the official statements made in Washington. The editor explains that a newspaper's search for the facts must be separated from any political stance on these facts. Hence, following up observations or official and media protests is a "scoop," something Egyptian readers are entitled to know. It has nothing to do with the "hollow allegations" by government media of inciting "foreigners" against the "free and independent will" of Egypt. Turning to analyze the "current official problem" between the Egyptian and U.S. Governments, the editor notes that "undoubtedly the U.S. Government will hold on to the current government, in view of the major role it plays in serving U.S. policy in the region and championing the Israeli peace. It is not ready to sacrifice it for the sake of sublime democratic principles." He notes that the Americans have greater "farsightedness" and believe that "extreme pressure on popular forces" could lead to an "explosion" in the most important Arab country, something that could shake up U.S. interests in the region. Instead, he adds, the U.S. Government, which cares about the Egyptian Government, wishes to "rationalize its performance, not get rid of it." The editor asserts that the U.S. stance toward the opposition in Egypt, which is "more rational" than that of the Egyptian Government, does not mean the United States wishes to change the regime in Egypt in favor of the Islamists. "All there is to the issue is that the United States knows more about the laws of nature than the Egyptian Government and realizes the importance of letting off steam to prevent an explosion," the editor adds. Referring to "regime" criticism of AL-SHA'B's stance, the editor suggests: "Nobody could outbid the Labor Party in its firm stances on the country's independence," asserting that the government remembers Egypt's "sovereignty" only when things come to "suppressing and muffling freedoms and falsifying the nation's will." Concluding, the editor notes that the repetition of the U.S. ambassador's denial in the media is an "additional sign of the weakness" of the regime and "further proof of subservience." Addressing the regime, the editor adds: "All the nation's cries and protests by leaders of the country from every direction could not move you, yet one report of a U.S. protest disturbed and unbalanced you. This extreme nervousness reflects your true affiliations, priorities, and agenda."

SUNDAY EDITION TO STOP

In a boxed announcement on the upper lefthand side of page 1, AL-SHA'B publishes the following: "The paper's management has been compelled to suspend the Sunday issue because of financial difficulties facing the newspaper. The management and editorial staff would like to thank their dear readers, who have shown much interest in the Sunday issue, which always sold out, as well as in the Tuesday and Friday issues, although the price of the paper is 50 percent higher than other papers."

SHUKRI SAYS GOVERNMENT FOOLING ITSELF ON ELECTIONS

Labor Party Chairman Ibrahim Shukri, in an approximately 1,200- word article on pages 1 and 8, says the government wants to close the file on the rigging and violence that marred the People's Assembly elections. In so doing, it seeks to turn the "premeditated" crime of falsifying the nation's will into a minor problem He notes that by claiming that all parties are represented in the Assembly, the government is fooling nobody, for if it continues to repeat claims about the fairness of the elections it will end up believing its own lies. But it will never deceive the people or the outside world. Noting that the 94 percent obtained by the government party in the elections is unprecedented anywhere, Shukri urges the government to open "judicial investigations" into the election incidents. He tells the government: "I do not expect this unlawful assembly to last long. If you do not return to your senses you will subject the country to a serious constitutional impasse in which regret will be of no use. If you are certain about the fairness of the elections, why are you afraid of investigating the accusations we are making against you. What are you afraid of?"

'ADIL HUSAYN VIEWS BID TO HOLD NEW ELECTIONS

Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn, in an approximately 5,000-word article on page 5, disagrees with President Mubarak's remarks before National Democratic Party parliamentarians, saying talk of election rigging is "meaningless" and "out of place" and, accordingly, "we must close this chapter." Husayn points out that the elections were rigged "from A to Z" in what amounts to a "coup" against the Constitution and pluralism. Thus, he adds, "this black chapter in Egypt's political history will not be closed unless the people restore their dignity and honor by imposing their will and compelling the government to repeat the general elections on fair bases, according to laws and customs that are well established." Noting that new elections are the only way to restore hopes of an "organized and gradual reform" and to "contain the tendency toward violence and a bloody revolution," Husayn points out that this requires "jihad and sacrifice." He explains that the first step in this regard is to "sidestep" the "natural" stage of "frustration" that gripped the opposition following the elections and to "reorganize" in preparation for a popular "counteroffensive." Toward that end, Husayn calls for an "urgent" meeting of the leaders of all opposition parties and forces to conduct an "extensive dialogue" to issue a "national accord charter." He adds: "With full determination and with all these forces, we will continue to strive to hold new general elections. Our cause will not die." While acknowledging that the political parties and associations are facing a "crisis," Husayn argues that this crisis is either the result of an "internal" problem in the parties or because of the "political environment" in which the parties operate. He points out that there is nothing in the "structure" of the Egyptian parties that precludes growth, not even claims that party leaders remain in their positions without change. Noting that "experienced and able leaders of an exquisite nature" are now heading all Egyptian parties, Husayn reviews the history and political background of the opposition parties, including the Muslim Brotherhood. This, he adds, leads you to conclude that the crisis is not the fault of the parties themselves, but is the result of the environment in which they operate. Explaining, Husayn notes that the "Emergency Law" that has been in force throughout the presidency of President Mubarak is keeping the public away from "participation in public life" and is making membership of political parties a "major risk," due to the harassment people face if they join opposition parties. And the parties cannot get close to the masses due to the restrictions on their activity in universities and companies and the ban on public rallies, he says.

Turning to official statements denying any external protests over the election outcome, Husayn describes these statements as a "desperate attempt" to distract attention from reality. Expressing surprise at the sudden "signs of extreme patriotism" by the regime in rejecting "external intervention" in the election results, Husayn asks why the regime has not rejected foreign intervention in such issues as economic affairs, the embargo on Libya and Iraq, and other regional issues. Defending his party's position, Husayn adds: "Patriotism as we understand it does not conflict with our right to incite the West and international public against your despotism and your aggression against human rights." He notes: "Our differences with pro-Israeli U.S. policy are known." He adds: Should we "converge" with the U.S. Administration on a particular point we must not reject this "convergence" simply because the other party is the United States." He adds: "Regardless of the reasons and intentions behind the U.S. position, it is the duty of the patriotic and democratic forces to benefit from this position." As for whether it was a mistake for the opposition to participate in the election, Husayn says: The "balance of power" was the decisive factor in the election battle, and it was this balance of power that enabled the "forces of evil and despotism" to succeed in the "29 November coup." But this success is "superficial" and must not overshadow the "awakening" of the people, which is the "real accomplishment" of the opposition forces, particularly the Islamic current. Concluding, Husayn vows to "bring down" the People's Assembly and hold new elections, adding that, united, the opposition parties can achieve this goal.

INDEPENDENT DEPUTY JOINS LABOR PARTY

An unattributed report on page 1 notes that 'Ali Fath-al-Bab, People's Assembly independent member representing the al-Tibbin constituency in southern Cairo, has submitted a request to join the Labor Party, which approved his request. This makes Fath-al-Bab the Labor Party's sole representative in the parliament.

HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER VIEWS ELECTION IRREGULARITIES

The "text" of a statement by the Legal Aid Center for Human Rights on the People's Assembly elections is published on page 12. The statement says that the "violence" and "election rigging" that marred the elections have destroyed the "essence" of the democratic system—the people's ability to change their government. The center adds that the 94 percent of parliament seats obtained by the ruling party is an "illogical" result that runs contrary to the nature of things and to the political and economic realities in the country. The center points out that the "restrictive" measures adopted by the government against the Muslim Brotherhood and the Labor Party reflected a "clear tendency" by the government to curtail, if not deny, any "representation by the Muslim Brotherhood Group in the new People's Assembly." These measures, the statement adds, included the trial of Brotherhood members in military courts before the elections, the "harassment" of Brotherhood candidates during their election campaigning, and the "mass arrests" of Brotherhood candidates' delegates during the first and second rounds of elections. The statement reviews what it calls the government's efforts to limit the representation of opposition parties in the parliament, citing "intervention" by security agencies in constituencies where leading oppositionists were running. Reviewing the "violations" that accompanied the elections, the center notes that the government's failure to update voters' lists according to the law denied "millions of voters who turned 18" the chance to exercise their right, due to the government's "deliberate" failure to enforce the registration of voters. Asserting that the Interior Ministry did not remain neutral during and after the elections, the statement explains that security men failed to prevent violations by candidates in some constituencies and expelled candidates' delegates from polling stations in others. Concluding, the statement adds the election results have "decimated the chances of peaceful change and political participation by all forces in running society's affairs, not to mention that broad sectors of the people were disappointed and overcome by indignation and anger."

WRITER VIEWS REPERCUSSIONS OF ISRAELI-U.S. PACT

Mahmud Bakri, in an approximately 1,500-word article on page 7, views the "threat" posed by the proposed U.S.-Israeli defense pact to pan-Arab security.

FORMER U.S. DIPLOMAT INTERVIEWED ON CONVERTING TO ISLAM

An interview with Robert Crane, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Arab Emirates who converted to Islam, is published on page 11. In the approximately 1,200-word interview, conducted by an unidentified correspondent for the magazine AL-MUSLIMUN, the former U.S. diplomat discusses his reasons for choosing to become a Muslim. He notes the "pressure" he faced in his work due to his religion, adding that he was removed from his job as ambassador in Abu Dhabi following his conversion.

Palestinian Affairs

'Text' of PA-Hamas Joint Communique

TA2412101095 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic
22 Dec 95 pp 1, 23

[Report by Tahir Shuraytah, AL-QUDS special correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo — Following is the text of the joint press communique issued at midnight [of 22 December] upon the conclusion of the talks between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]:

A round of meetings was held in Cairo 18-21 December between a Palestinian National Authority [PNA] delegation headed by brother Salim al-Za'nun, and a Hamas delegation headed by brother Khalid Mash'al. The meetings were held within the context of the ongoing dialogue in a bid to reach firm bases that consolidate Palestinian national unity, serve the supreme interests of the Palestinian people, and realize their national goals, including the right to self-determination and establishment of an independent state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

The issues that the two sides placed on the agenda were discussed at the meetings. They included:

1. Palestinian national unity and ways of consolidating and protecting it.
2. The Palestinian legislative council elections.
3. Relations between the PNA and Hamas.
4. The PLO's and the National Authority's commitments.

The dialogue was conducted in a fraternal atmosphere of frankness, clarity, joint keenness, and agreement on enhancing democratic relations among the one Palestinian people and their political forces. The two delegations agreed on the following:

1. Emphasizing the need to entrench national unity on the basis of political pluralism, forbid internecine fighting, and adopt the principle of dialogue as the only civilized approach for interaction among the various parties in the Palestinian arena.

2. Stressing the need to create a climate for boosting confidence and cooperation in order to consolidate the unity of the Palestinian rank with a view to achieving the national goals.

3. Underscoring the need to exert all efforts for the release of all sister and brother prisoners and detainees in the occupation's jails.

4. Forming a joint committee to deal with emerging problems.

In light of the dialogue between the two sides on the legislative council elections and the PNA's commitments, Hamas reserved its stance regarding these two issues while not forcing anyone to boycott the elections. Hamas does not seek to embarrass the PNA.

What was achieved, with God's grace, in this round of dialogue is a positive and important step toward the continuation of the method of democratic and fraternal dialogue. In this context, it was agreed to continue the meetings with a view to deepening understanding and brotherhood among the one people.

The two delegations expressed their gratitude to the Arab Republic of Egypt, President Husni Mubarak, and the Egyptian Government and fraternal people for hosting the meetings on Egyptian soil.

And hold fast, all together, by the rope which God stretches out for you, and be not divided among yourselves [Koranic verse].

May God's peace and blessing be upon you.
Dated: 21 December 1995 Cairo.
Signed: Salim al-Za'nun and Khalid Mash'al.

Hamas Says Military Operations To Continue

NC2212154195 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1448 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 22 Dec (MENA)—The two delegations of the Palestinian National Authority [PA] and the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, held a news conference today at the end of four days of talks in Cairo. They did not reach agreement on the disputed issues, notably Hamas military operations against the Israelis and its participation in the Palestinian legislative elections.

Khalid Mash'al, head of the Hamas delegation to the talks, declared that his movement's decision not to halt its military operations constitutes a legitimate struggle that targets the occupying power, not the PA.

Mash'al remarked: We do not want to embarrass the PA. Quite the contrary, armed struggle assists the Palestinian negotiators' position and boosts the PA itself.

Salim al-Za'nun, head of the PA delegation, noted: Hamas does not carry out any operations against us. If an operation is conducted in the areas still under Israeli occupation, the reaction will come from the Israelis. If Hamas carried out an operation in Hebron, where we have no authority, no one can ask us to do anything.

Asked why the PA has failed to obtain promises from Hamas regarding the two main disputed issues, that is, halting armed struggle and taking part in the legislative elections, Salim al-Za'nun replied: We did not come here to get anything from Hamas and similarly they did not come here for this purpose.

Usamah Hamdan, member of the Hamas delegation, said that during the talks the delegation members listened to the PA's viewpoint, but found nothing in it to make them change their minds.

He remarked: Indeed the PA's justifications made us more determined to cling to our position.

Hamdan denied any disagreement between Hamas leaders in the territories and their counterparts abroad over the talks with the PA. He asserted that Hamas ranks are united and Hamas members in the territories and abroad are in full coordination.

Hamas: Jihad Option 'Legitimate' Under Occupation

JN2212185995 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1625 GMT 22 Dec 95

[Interview with Khalid Mash'al, member of Hamas leadership and head of Hamas delegation to the Cairo talks with the Palestinian Authority, by Salim Badawi; date and place not given; from "The Week's Event" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Mash'al] We adhere to our position not to participate in the elections. We believe that the elections are not the sole manifestation of political activity and of participation in democratic life. It is only one of these manifestations. For several reasons, we are of the opinion that participation in elections does not befit us. It is not in harmony with the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] program. However, there are so many manifestations of political activity in Palestinian society, which has been accustomed to various forms of political work, mass movements, and professional and trade union action. This creates interactions within the Palestinian society, allowing for expression of opinions and airing of grievances of our Palestinian people.

I believe there is plenty of room for Hamas and for all Palestinian forces and movements to carry out daily political work.

[Badawi] Concerning the continuation of the armed struggle, how can this struggle fail to disturb and weaken the Palestinian National Authority?

[Mash'al] We believe that under the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the resistance and jihad option remains legitimate. There is no logic, justice, or Palestinian people's interest in demanding a halt to the Palestinian resistance as long as the occupation exists. It is true that the Palestinian Authority's [PA] delegation said this embarrasses them. We told them that the Hamas resistance aims at the Zionist occupation, and not the PA. Hamas does not even aim to embarrass the PA. We believe that even if we take the PA's negotiations into consideration, continuing the resistance by Hamas and other Palestinian opposition forces is a powerful chip which the PA must use to pressure the Israeli side to retreat from its stands and withdraw from Palestinian territory.

Options for military action are numerous, and I believe that there will be no problem. On the contrary, no one should force the people to renounce the resistance option as long as the occupation exists, with all its repressive manifestations. This means a great loss and a sellout of our people's right to defend themselves and endeavor to realize their freedom and liberate their land.

Al-Zahhar Denies Hamas Calling for Boycott

JN2612074995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hamas official] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar has asserted that Hamas [Islamic Restistance Movement] will comply with the agreement recently reached in Cairo with the National Authority, which stipulates that Hamas will not call for boycotting the elections.

Al-Zahhar added: The Cairo meetings were the beginning of the road. They will be followed by further meetings either inside or outside the homeland until complementarity is achieved.

Al-Zahhar denied his movement issued any statement calling for boycotting the elections or violating the agreements reached in Cairo. He indicated that Hamas will not deny anyone the right to take part in elections. Al-Zahhar appealed to all Palestinian groups to push for a reconciliation, and extend bridges of trust to rebuild what the occupation has destroyed.

Nomination Deadline for Legislative Council Extended

JN2312215695 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Central Elections Committee has decided to extend the deadline for accepting nomination applications for membership in the legislative council and for the post of president until midnight tonight.

The initial lists of nominees will be announced during a news conference the Central Elections Committee will hold tomorrow morning at al-Birah Municipality, while the final lists of nominees will be published on 30 December. Contests can be presented to the Central Elections Committee through the committee's offices at the Higher Education Council building in al-Birah and the Central Elections Committee's office in Gaza or through the electoral constituencies.

Mahmud 'Abbas Holds News Conference on Elections

JN2412210995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Repot by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, head of the Central Elections Committee, has said that the committee will do its best to be neutral in order to realize the higher interest of the homeland.

In a news conference held at the headquarters of the Legislative Assembly in Gaza this evening, Abu-Mazin said that President Yasir 'Arafat and Mrs. Samihah Khalil are the only candidates in the upcoming presidential elections that will be held on 20 January.

Abu-Mazin demanded to withdraw any [word indistinct] that have been given to the candidates who occupied higher positions in the National Authority in order to be on equal footing with other candidates. He emphasized that any candidate should resign his governmental posts.

Abu-Mazin said selecting him as head of the Central Elections Committee was made on the basis of his personal status and not for his affiliation to any movement. He added: I will make great efforts to realize the national interest for all.

'Abbas revealed that the initial list of candidates includes 298 candidates in the Gaza Strip and 402 in the West Bank, including Jerusalem.

Abu-Mazin urged citizens to present their appeals and complaints during the next two days to the Central Elections Committee and the committee comprising judges from the Higher Court of Appeal whose headquarters will be in the Legislative Assembly in Gaza, and in the Higher Education Council in Ramallah, in the West Bank.

Abu-Mazin said lists of candidates will be distributed to the 16 constituencies.

Lawyer Tawfiq Abu-Ghazalah, who participated in the news conference, said that the official electoral campaign will begin on 1 January. He said any campaign before this date will be illegal.

Abu-Ghazalah said that the number of voters registered in the West Bank and Gaza Strip totals 1.04 million

Nomination for presidential elections and the Legislative Assembly closed at midnight last night.

Nine Cabinet Members Resign To Run in Elections

JN2412085495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 24 dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat chaired the weekly cabinet meeting held in Bethlehem yesterday. The cabinet discussed preparations for the legislative elections. Nine cabinet members resigned in order to run for the legislative assembly. The remaining 15 members will keep their posts until the legislative assembly elections scheduled for 20 January are over.

The cabinet discussed preparations for Christmas celebrations, which will be held in Bethlehem under the National Authority for the first time. The cabinet also discussed the transfer of the remainder of the Palestinian cities to the National Authority, the entry of Palestinian forces, significant administrative and political issues, and national dialogue between the Palestinian authority and the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement.

PFLP's al-Maliki Said To Stand in Election

JN2112132095 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 21 Dec 95 p 16

[FBIS Translated Text] Occupied Ramallah—AL-RA'Y—Riyadh al-Maliki, member of the Central Committee of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], has decided to nominate himself for the [Palestinian] legislative council elections in the Ramallah Constituency. On Tuesday, he started collecting the signatures required by the nomination procedures. This means that he will stand for election as an independent.

However, observers following the electoral debates and consultations in the city of Ramallah said it is possible that al-Maliki will form a bloc with the Palestinian People's Party, which announced the candidacy of three of its members; namely, Taysir al-'Aruri, Bassam al-Salihi, and Dr. Mustafa al-Barghuthi. The observers said they expect 'Abd-al-Jawad Salih, member of the Palestine National Council and former al-Birah mayor, to join the bloc.

The decision surprised political and party circles in the city, especially since the PFLP Central Committee announced, following a recent meeting, that it will boycott the elections.

Other sources said they expect al-Maliki to join the list of either the Fatah Movement or FIDA [Palestinian Democratic Union Party]. They added that contacts in this respect will be held within next few days.

Press sources said on Tuesday that talks are underway in Jerusalem to form a national coalition list with the participation of Fatah, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and the PFLP. They cited al-Maliki as a potential PFLP candidate for the constituency.

At any rate, al-Maliki's latest move, represented in collecting signatures in Ramallah, puts an end to speculations and confirms his decision of candidacy in Ramallah and not Jerusalem.

Al-Maliki, Hamami Said Not To Run

TA2412110095 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 24 Dec 95 p 7

[Report by unidentified special AL-QUDS correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jerusalem — Shaykh Jamil Hamami, one of the figures closest to Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and Dr. Riyad al-Maliki, who is close to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], affirmed that they will not run in the upcoming elections battle for the Palestinian council.

Reports throughout yesterday had talked about the possibility of the establishment of a national coalition, composed of figures from Fatah, the PFLP, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and independents, that would run in the elections from Jerusalem.

In a statement to AL-QUDS following his return from Cairo, Shaykh Hamami affirmed that he adheres to Hamas' position on boycotting the elections and that what had been reported about his participation in a national coalition was merely ideas for the sake of serving Jerusalem. That was within framework of his personal interpretation.

Shaykh Hamami had been cited as saying that he might participate, under certain conditions, as an independent figure in the proposed coalition. [passage omitted]

Al-Husayni Decides Not To Run for Election

JN2512155895 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem file, has said that he does not intend to run in the Legislative Assembly elections in the Jerusalem constituency, citing his desire to shoulder full responsibility toward Jerusalem in a way that will not affect his performance.

During a meeting with some representatives of local newspapers and world news agencies this morning, al-Husayni said that he has informed the Fatah command of his decision. He noted that he will continue his support for the peace process, elections, and the role of Fatah in these two areas.

He said there is still hope that a national unity list will be formed in Jerusalem to include most trends. He added: It is not necessary for each political movement to form a special list. Candidates as a whole can form one list that is acceptable to citizens who are eligible to vote.

On the size of Fatah representation in any list to be formed in Jerusalem, al-Husayni said the movement has a reasonable percentage.

The Palestinian official dismissed reports of discord inside Fatah regarding elections in Jerusalem.

Palestinian Police Deployed in 5 Hebron Villages

JN2612080795 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A Palestinian police force arrived in villages and towns in Hebron this morning. It was deployed in five main locations; namely, Bani Na'im, Yattah, al-Zahiriyah, Dura, and Nuba.

The 300-strong police force was accompanied by Brigadier General al-Hajj Isma'il Jabr, commander of the National Security Forces in the West Bank, and Colonel Jibril al-Rujub, commander of the Preventive Security Forces.

It should be recalled that the occupation troops completed their withdrawal from the aforementioned villages at midnight yesterday, when the Palestinian flag was hoisted over al-Zahiriyah jail.

Al-Tibi: PA Will Not Tolerate Attacks on Israelis

TA2412170095 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, political adviser to PA Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, by Mikhal Gazit and Gil Yerushalmi; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Gazit] Good evening to Yasir 'Arafat's close adviser, Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi.

[Al-Tibi] Good evening, Mikhal.

[Gazit] You have just concluded an urgent meeting with Chairman 'Arafat which focused on the connection between this morning's attack in the Gaza Strip and the failure of the talks with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in Cairo.

[Al-Tibi] The chairman summoned us to a meeting, and the issue of today's attack definitely came up for discussion. This is a negative development. Such an incident has not taken place for a long time. The chairman takes a very grave view of the matter.

[Yerushalmi] Do you expect an increase in terrorist attacks following the breakdown of the talks in Cairo?

[Al-Tibi] No, I do not expect this to happen. I hope that this was a random and isolated operation. If not, the Palestinian Authority [PA] will be unable to tolerate such attacks, which violate the PA's commitments.

[Yerushalmi] Nevertheless, Hamas has categorically stated that it will not participate in the elections and that it will continue the struggle against Israel.

[Al-Tibi] I do not consider this a positive or constructive declaration leading to reconciliation. I hope that the Hamas officials will come to their senses and that this will not be their final word. By participating in the elections, they will be taking part in the decisionmaking process and the democratic game, without being compelled in any way to accept the others' political positions or to support the Oslo agreements. They can voice their opposition.

[Gazit] Israel enjoyed a lengthy period of relative quiet while the PA was negotiating with Hamas. Putting a halt to terrorism is very important for us, and it now appears that the issue has been reopened and that we have to start worrying again, unless the Palestinian Police decides to take tough steps against Hamas.

[Al-Tibi] The PA will not be able to countenance any violation of the law or any manifestations of violence which could embarrass the PA or undermine the agreements and commitments it has taken upon itself. This includes terrorist attacks against Israelis. The chairman takes a most serious and grave view of this issue.

[Gazit] What does this mean from the operational aspect? Will there be renewed arrests, for example?

[Al-Tibi] The Palestinian Police will do everything to investigate and determine the identity of those behind today's attack and to foil any attempts to carry out future attacks, not only on the basis of reconciliation agreements but also as a result of the efforts of the authorities and the Palestinian Police. This issue will be firmly clarified to the relevant parties.

[Yerushalmi] Do you feel that the PA today has more public support for taking steps to restrain Hamas than it did in the past?

[Al-Tibi] It is clear that in the Palestinian street today, Chairman 'Arafat and the PA are at the peak of their political, popular, and public support. Such attacks do not have the public's backing, to say the very least. Therefore, the PA, both in accordance with its international commitments and on the basis of the Palestinian public's positions, draws strength and encouragement and will not permit the recurrence of such incidents. I am aware of the Israeli public's concern about terrorist attacks. I am also aware of the fact that there were no attacks for a long time as a result of the tremendous efforts invested by the PA. The PA promises to continue its activity in order to prevent future attacks.

[Gazit] Thank you, Dr. al-Tibi.

Officials Attribute Charges Against Iran to Mosad

*LD2212160795 Tehran IRNA in English
1552 GMT 22 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Athens, Dec. 22, IRNA — Many Palestinians have described as "nonsense" the charges made by Palestine National Authority (PNA) secret police chief in Gaza Amin al-Hindi that Iran was plotting to kill PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, said a dispatch from occupied Qods [Jerusalem] Friday.

The dispatch said high-ranking PNA officials who agreed to speak on condition of anonymity intimated that the source of al-Hindi's accusation was intelligence disinformation provided to the PNA by the Israeli Mosad.

There has been a close working relationship between the Israeli intelligence and al-Hindi's secret police, and with the present security chiefs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Jibril Rajub and Muhammad Halaf, and another internal intelligence officer in Gaza called Musa 'Arafat.

Within the context of this relationship, al-Hindi and other fellow officers are accorded by Israel the privilege of vips and can therefore enter Israel without restrictions.

Al-Hindi in particular is seen having special relationship with the Israelis. Indeed Islamic circles in the Gaza Strip openly call him an "Israeli agent." On many occasions al-Hindi held midnight coordination sesssions with Israeli secret police Shin Bet agents against the Islamic movement of Palestine.

Palestinian intellectuals contend that the latest charges against Islamic Iran was an Israeli ploy to distract Mosad's real attempt to kill 'Arafat, said the dispatch. Al-Hindi was quoted by an Italian TV station Wednesday alleging that Iran was plotting to kill 'Arafat.

French Foreign Minister de Charette Arrives

Meets With 'Arafat in Gaza

*JN2212202595 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic
1900 GMT 22 Dec 95*

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] A meeting between His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat and French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette at the Presidency in Gaza concluded a short while ago.

At a joint news conference with Herve de Charette in the Conference Hall at the Presidency in Gaza, President 'Arafat lauded French support for the peace process and the Palestinian people. He thanked the French Government, the French president, and the French people for their assistance to the Palestinian people on all levels, particularly in the economic, political, cultural, and technical fields, and also in efforts to build a port.

President 'Arafat added: We are well aware that France will make a positive effort at the donor nations' conference scheduled to convene in Paris on 9 January, especially because since this conference will be crucial for the Palestinian people and for the peace process.

President 'Arafat said he hoped that the Israeli withdrawal from the remaining cities and villages in the West Bank will proceed on schedule. He asserted that the Palestinian-Israeli agreement has taken on an international dimension. He also thanked the French foreign minister for visiting the Palestinian territories at a time that coincides with the raising of the Palestinian flag in the liberated city of Bethlehem.

For his part, French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette underlined his country's constant support for the peace process and the Palestinian people. He emphasized the importance of Palestinian-French cooperation for the sake of creating a better future. He said he was impressed and pleased by the Palestinian people's happiness and jubilation which he saw in Bethlehem during Christmas celebrations, which coincide with the liberation of Bethlehem. He added that his visit to Bethlehem was exciting. He indicated that peace carries a price.

Minister Herve de Charette went on to say that 50 representatives of world states will take part in the upcoming donor nations' conference. He added that the conference will mark a milestone in efforts to develop the Palestinian territories.

With regard to French aid to the National Authority, Herve de Charette said that France will make immense efforts to support Palestinian projects, particularly the television station project as well as educational projects. Moreover, France will pressure the donor nations to promote development in the Palestinian territories.

In a separate development, Nabil Abu-Rudaynah has announced that President 'Arafat will arrive in Bethlehem tomorrow, Saturday, where he will preside over a meeting of the National Authority's Council of Ministers. Moreover, President 'Arafat will take part in the glorious Christmas celebrations, which coincide with the liberation of Bethlehem. He will deliver a political speech there. He will also meet with Palestinian and international figures there.

Meets With al-Husayni at Orient House

JN2312133095 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1227 GMT 23 Dec 95

[Report by 'Arif Salim; from "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem portfolio, received French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette at Orient House this morning. Al-Husayni made the following statement to our radio:

[Begin recording] [al-Husayni] I had a meeting today with the French foreign minister at Orient House. The meeting was characterized by a positive understanding of the importance of the political process and of the status of Jerusalem and the importance of the Palestinian role in this process. France believes that eastern Jerusalem is part of the occupied territories. France adheres to this position. We think that Palestinian-French cooperation and a greater role by France in the political process could lead to real peace in the region under which all parties would secure their rights and the Palestinian-Islamic-Christian right to the city of Jerusalem would be preserved. In addition, the French foreign minister carried out other activities. He awarded a medal to Patriarch Michel al-Sabah at the Latin Church in Jerusalem. He also delivered a speech expressing the French position, which is interested in the future of Jerusalem and the Christian and Islamic status of this city. The French foreign minister's activities were marked by the same spirit that characterizes French policy. The French foreign minister met yesterday with President Yasir 'Arafat. He will meet with him again today in Bethlehem as part of Christmas celebrations. I would like to reiterate that our meeting is characterized by the same spirit of French policy over the past years. This policy is marked by respect for international rights, international law, and international resolutions, and a friendly policy toward the Palestinians. We have been discussing the issue of Jerusalem and elections in Jerusalem for some time now. We have been discussing Jerusalem, in terms of its status, importance, and the problem that we might face in the coming negotiations. The nationalist sides and figures, in all their factions and regardless of their political affiliations, think that we as Palestinians may differ over many issues except that of Jerusalem. Everybody has a clear stand on Jerusalem. This is why there is a general tendency to consider Jerusalem — regardless of what will take place in the rest of the Palestinian cities — in the elections as a national unity that accommodates all views through well-known Palestinian figures who hold these views. These views could be Islamic, leftist, centrist, rightist, etc. All of them share one view regarding the elections in Jerusalem. Palestinians have one constant position on Jerusalem, even if they differ over other issues.

[Salim] Who will run in the elections?

[Al-Husayni] There are names. I do not wish now to divulge all the names. Perhaps, in two or more hours, we will know all the details. [end recording]

Bahrain Recognizes Palestinian Passport

JN2312211895 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Government of Bahrain has announced its recognition of the Palestinian passport issued by the National Authority.

The Palestinian Embassy in Manama received an official decision from the Bahraini Foreign Ministry, including a circular distributed to all competent quarters at Bahraini border checkpoints to recognize the Palestinian passport — both ordinary and diplomatic.

'Arafat Receives Chinese Envoy's Credentials

JN2312211395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat today received the credentials of Chinese Ambassador (Qin Chu Long). Long delivered a message to the president from Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng.

The Chinese legation office to the Palestinian National Authority was opened in the city of Gaza today.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Al-Asad Said Open to Upgrading Talks

TA2412191795 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad showed flexibility in his meetings in Cairo. Al-Asad told Egyptian President Husni Mubarak that the possibility of raising the level of the talks with Israel should not be rejected out of hand. It all depends, al-Asad explained, on the proposals presented by Israel at the upcoming talks in Washington. [passage omitted]

Egypt Sees Successful End to Israel-Syria Talks

TA2512190195 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 25 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A very optimistic timetable was presented in Cairo today with regard to a peace agreement between Israel and Syria. Based on the recent talks with President al-Asad and with Foreign Minister Baraq, sources in President Mubarak's office estimated today that the negotiations will end successfully within eight months. [passage omitted]

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres stated today that what has been done in the past two weeks in the negotiations with Syria had not been done in the last three years. He made these remarks in a closed meeting with members of the Meretz faction. This is reported by our political editor Gadi Sukenik.

Algeria

Dembri Rejects Morocco's Call To Suspend UMA

LD2412214995 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement by the Foreign Affairs Ministry notes that today Mr. Ahmed Attaf, secretary of state for cooperation and Maghreban affairs and official spokesman of the government, received the Moroccan ambassador to Algeria and handed him a message from Mr. Mohamed Salah Dembri, the Algerian foreign affairs minister, in reply to the message which Mr. Abdellatif Filali, the prime minister and foreign affairs and cooperation minister in the Kingdom of Morocco, had sent him.

Mr. Ahmed Attaf also received the ambassadors of Tunisia and Mauritania, and the Libyan charge d'affaires, and he handed them messages from Mr. Mohamed Salah Dembri to his Maghreban counterparts. The messages call on the governments of the Maghreban partners to inform Algeria, which currently heads the Arab Maghreb Union [UMA], of their stances over Morocco's request for suspending the union's activities.

The message of Mr. Mohamed Salah Dembri, the foreign affairs minister, to Mr. Abdellatif Filali, the prime minister and foreign affairs and cooperation minister in the Kingdom of Morocco, said: I have acquainted myself of your message, dated 20 December, instant, with astonishment and some frustration, wherein I noticed that its content and tone, and the publicity with which it was surrounded, carried in its folds an orientation which complicates the situation even further in the Arab Maghreb region.

Algeria's stance toward the Western Saharan issue is based on principles motivated by firm ethics in the Algerian people's collective conscience, a position which the international community shares with it.

Mr. Dembri said: My message, dated 6 December, instant, addressed to the UN Security Council's president, did not in any way constitute an event without a precedent, at a time when Algeria had officially declared its views and its effort to help in the sound and firm implementation of the plan to settle the Western Saharan issue, and also on account of the fact that Algeria is an official observer of the course for implementing this settlement, the plan which had been prepared by the United Nations and the OAU, which was approved by the two sides to the conflict.

On the other hand, Mr. Dembri said in his message to Mr. Abdellatif Filali: The connection which your message has established between the recent diplomatic developments over the Western Saharan issue and the activities of the Maghreban institutions was unjustified. The halting of the activities of the union's institutions, which you have requested, though temporarily, cannot be advantageous.

Radio Rejects Moroccan Complaint on Polisario

LD2312150495 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Western Saharan file has been brought into focus one again following the Security Council's recent vote which passed a new resolution on the problem rejecting the proposals put forward by UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali to facilitate the rigging of the electoral lists by enlisting the 135,000 Moroccans who want to take part in the referendum despite lacking the proper legal documents.

The Security Council also reiterated its determination to organize a free and fair referendum on self-determination as soon as possible in accordance with the peace plan accepted by both Morocco and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro [Polisario].

Algeria, which was the first country to support the Saharan people and its just cause and still does so 20 years later, did not hesitate to support the Polisario front when it was facing some real attempts to rig the registering of eligible voters. Algeria made strong moves with concerned parties in order to help the Polisario front by asking its permanent delegate to the United Nations to initiate talks with Butrus-Ghali on the latest development.

Algeria's stance drew the Security Council's admiration. The Council thanked Algeria for its effort to contain the crisis, which nearly wrecked completely the United Nations' efforts.

However, the Moroccan authorities have condemned Algeria's stance. AFP reports that the day before yesterday the Moroccan prime minister wrote to Foreign Minister Mohamed Salah Dembri asking his to immediately freeze the activities of the Arab Maghreb Union, chaired currently by Algeria, because of the latter's support for the Polisario front.

However, a decision like this cannot just be taken without proper procedures; it requires further talks and extensive consideration. The Algerian authorities believe in proper procedures.

Nonetheless, Morocco should not forget or try to ignore the fact that Algeria's stance on Western Sahara is not a transient one which can fluctuate with changing circumstances and individuals, but is a resolute and a permanent one which will never change.

TV Producer Found Shot Dead in Algiers Suburb

LD2312131295 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement released today, the security services said that the body of Khaled Merioud, a producer at the national television company, was found in the eastern Algiers suburb of Baraki this morning.

Khaled Merioud, 38 years old, had been shot dead after he was kidnapped in the Djebel area in Bourouba [Algiers suburb] yesterday.

Civilians Killed by 'Armed Islamist Groups'

LD2412175995 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Several civilians have been killed by armed Islamist groups in various Algerian towns over the last few days. This is what dailies published in Algiers have reported.

Security Forces 'Eliminate' 33 'Criminals'

LD2312193895 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The security services said in a statement issued today that they have eliminated 33 criminals in Djelfa, Laghouat, Blida, Bouira, Ain Defla, Jijel, L'msila, Constantine, Algiers, and Batna. The security forces seized some weapons and ammunition.

Other Actions Against Armed Groups

LD2412224395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The security services said in a statement today that the security forces yesterday killed a dangerous armed group which was active in the capital, Algiers. Another group of criminals has also been eliminated in the central and eastern part of the homeland during various search operations.

The security services' statement pointed out that during a search operation carried out by the security services last night in La Cite d'Urgence in El Harrach, the security forces succeeded in killing a dangerous armed group made up of five criminals who were behind numerous bloody acts. The security services' statement added that a Kalashnikov automatic submachinegun, three automatic pistols, in addition to a pistol and a dagger, have been recovered.

On the other hand, according to the same source, the security forces also succeeded in killing numerous criminals in M'Sila, Oum El Bouaghi, Blida, Jijil, and Chlef, and recovered a quantity of weapons.

[Paris France-2 Teletext in French at 1827 GMT on 24 December, in a related report, states: "Eleven armed Islamists were killed by the Algerian security forces on Saturday. Five were killed in El Harrach (suburb in eastern Algiers), two in Bousaada, another two in Oum el Bouaghi, one in Blida, and another in Chlef. This is what the security forces have announced. They added that they recovered two Kalashnikovs, five automatic pistols and six rifles."]

Egypt

Mubarak, al-Asad Hold News Conference in Cairo

NC2312174095 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1514 GMT 23 Dec 95

[News conference by President Husni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad with unidentified correspondents in Cairo on 23 December — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Mubarak] I meet periodically with my brother President Hafiz al-Asad to exchange views on current topical affairs and on our own affairs. We also discuss bilateral cooperation and cooperation between us and the rest of the Arab world. We seek to guide such cooperation in the right direction.

I do not need to welcome my brother President Hafiz al-Asad after our meeting here. Neither do I need a special welcome whenever I go to Damascus, because the relations between our two countries have been strong for a long time. We have a long history of Syrian-Egyptian relations. We talked about the Middle East issue, bilateral ties, and the basic question of peace. I believe we always agree to follow the same policy, namely, a policy of peace. Thank you.

[Al-Asad] I wish to thank brother President Husni Mubarak for the remarks he has made and the good meeting we had today. As President Mubarak has noted and as we stated on past occasions, whenever we meet, we discuss current issues, particularly matters of mutual interest, and issues of interest to the Arab nation. Our views are generally in agreement on the issues discussed.

This meeting was like earlier ones. We always have problems to discuss. I mean, we in the Arab nation, always have problems to talk about in the sense of always having issues to discuss. Some are new, some are old, and some are old issues that have been revived. At any rate, this is an important task. Whenever we have the right views, we serve our nation and populations. When we err, we do them harm. We always try to minimize our errors in order to avoid harming our people. This is what we do during our meetings. We always seek to reach correct solutions.

I repeat my thanks to brother President Mubarak. Peace be with you. Please feel free to ask if you have any questions.

[Correspondent] Is there genuine, tangible progress on the Syrian track of the peace process? [words indistinct]

[Mubarak] In fact, [words indistinct] I would like to point out that regarding the Syrian track, brother President Hafiz al-Asad has confirmed that Syria wants peace. I believe that the horizons of peace (?are open). I believe that President Hafiz al-Asad really means this. Regarding the normalization of ties, this depends on the flexibility that will be shown by the Israeli side within the context of a fair solution to the problem.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad: After your meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, it appears that the United States put forward new ideas to the Syrian leadership. What are these new proposals that paved the way for the negotiations between the Syrian and Israeli parties that will resume after a six-month halt? What is new?

[Al-Asad] In fact, what happened during the meeting is that an atmosphere of openness was emphasized that was better than previously. No one discussed any specific issue with me. There is nothing specific, but general ideas and views characterized by openness and a desire to advance the peace process. Syria supports this.

[Correspondent] According to reports, there will be a relaxation on the Syrian track with the Israeli side, God willing. What about Lebanon?

[Al-Asad] Syria and Lebanon take parallel and complementary steps. Everyone who deals with us in the peace process knows this. There is a link between the two tracks that is difficult to break.

[Correspondent] President Mubarak, after his recent trip of the region, Christopher visited you and briefed you on the results of his talks with various parties. He stated that the U.S. Administration is determined to take an active role in the peace process, specifically on the Syrian track. Can you shed light on this role or did Christopher brief you on the nature of these efforts?

[Mubarak] The U.S. role has been important to the peace process from the start. The U.S. role [words indistinct] President al-Asad knows well that the U.S. role is very important in the peace process, because the relations with Israel and Syria [words indistinct].

[Correspondent] Did Mr. Christopher inform you about this role?

[Mubarak] If he informed me, he must have informed President Hafiz al-Asad. He would not tell him something and tell me something else. He knows that we talk together, and we will talk together about everything on the table.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad, Israeli officials have recently said that Israel is not committed to withdraw to the 4 June 1967 border, as there is no historical or legal justification for such a withdrawal. How do you view this?

[Al-Asad] The whole world, those who are following the developments, know Syria's position. Withdrawal from the occupied territories is determined and emphasized by the Security Council resolutions, the U.S. initiative, and people's adherence to their full rights. If peace were to be achieved, it would basically be based on the land issue. Those who say they want to keep the land axiomatically mean they do not want peace.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] early-warning station which he said must exist on the Golan. After that, an Israeli official said that Syria must withdraw its forces from the Israeli border and that a buffer zone must be established from the River Jordan up to Damascus.

[Al-Asad] Who said that?

[Correspondent] Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Uri Or.

[Al-Asad] Anyway, we were not told of this. In previous talks, six months or more ago, I believe, we agreed on a host of items. But no peace arrangements must harm or affect the sovereignty of the other side.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, we would like you to explain briefly the real situation. We know that Syrian-Israeli negotiations will be held in the United States in about five days. We heard that Syria has agreed to some Israeli points or conditions. We would like to hear from you the facts concerning the land-for-peace exchange.

[Al-Asad] What happened was completely the opposite. What we were told of must be desirable for both sides: the resumption of the talks without any conditions by anyone or demanded of anyone. There are no conditions. At our meeting with the U.S. peace team, we did not specify an agenda, any certain subjects. This is a fact. There was no specific point, as was the case in previous meetings. This is because there is a different situation now, we hope a better one. Those who will meet in Washington, or near Washington, under the sponsorship of the Americans, will decide the topics of discussions during their talks.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency President Husni Mubarak: How do you view the current Yemeni-Eritrean conflict, and what role can Egypt play to solve it?

[Mubarak] We believe that the conflict must not develop into an armed confrontation. The parties must sit together and agree on a solution to this problem because they are two friendly countries. We do not want fighting. They should solve the problem in accordance with the valid laws and conventions.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency President al-Asad: During his recent visit to Washington Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that peace with Syria would end the Arab-Israeli conflict. What do you think of this, and how do you view the future of the Palestine question in light of the current momentum for a comprehensive peace in the region?

[Al-Asad] As you know, we have always embraced the Palestinian cause, and we made painful sacrifices for its sake. This is the cause of every one of us. But as you know, there is no link between our ideas and the [Israeli-PLO] agreement. We did not oppose it in practice; we did not take measures to hinder it, and we informed the concerned parties at the PLO of this position at the time. But we clearly expressed our dissatisfaction for many reasons I do not want to enumerate here. The Americans know our position, the Israelis know it through the Americans, and the brother Palestinians also know it.

Anyway, the Palestinians took that measure as they saw it; they believed it was good for them. They signed an agreement; it is a peace agreement. Whether or not the implementation is proceeding as it should is another story. We hear about this from news media and from some Palestinian forces.

Since the Oslo agreement, we have engaged in no specific activity to help or hinder the Palestinians—I mean the PLO, of course. The PLO took this thing upon itself. At the time, I told the PLO chairman that we were not happy with that. Nevertheless, we would not do things to hinder the agreement; that is, we did not want to create a problem with our Palestinian brothers; we have enough problems in the Arab world. Things are happening, as we and you hear.

But anyway, they have now signed an agreement, which is a peace agreement. In our view, comprehensiveness now means Syria and Lebanon. Syria has not changed its expression about a just and comprehensive solution since before the Madrid conference was launched. This was discussed with the Americans, and we stipulated it as a basic principle.

By a comprehensive solution we mean [including] the people around Israel, in general, who are directly concerned with the peace. Of course, peace is a peace for all the Arabs; all the Arabs are involved in it. But things have always started from the surrounding, or the cordon states, as they have recently been called. Of the cordon states, only Syria and Lebanon have not concluded agreements with Israel. Comprehensive peace will be achieved when Syria and Lebanon sign a peace agreement. Naturally, I never mean that an Arab will abandon the other Arabs. The issues of the Arabs, no matter how they look and how some of the Arabs view them, will remain Arab issues. Assistance and feelings of pan-Arab responsibility will remain the basis.

At certain times in the past we used to try to impose particular methods or views. Now we have discovered that this is no longer useful, especially, as you know, since some people have adopted the cry of "end the custodianship" and things like that. We back the ending of custodianship. I never felt at any time that I wanted to impose custodianship on any other Arab party, either the PLO, another Arab country, or anyone at all. I remember that I made this reply when this slogan was initiated: It is we who want you to end your custodianship of us.

You see, we used to shoulder the major burden. The Palestinian people are our people and over many years we experienced their suffering with them. This went on for many years, starting even before the birth of the present generation. Matters remain complicated today, but it seems there is progress in the method they [the PLO] chose. We are clearly proceeding from the principles of the Madrid operation and what we agreed upon before the peace process began in Madrid. This was something that had been much debated and that involved real efforts to surmount the challenges we faced. We agreed on certain principles. We are proceeding in accordance with these principles. We have not and will not abandon the principles that formed the basis of our current endeavor. Some brothers, of course, placed themselves outside the scope of these principles.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency President Mubarak, should we expect a collective Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi initiative to solve the conflict between Eritrea and Yemen. How true are the reports about an Israeli role in encouraging Eritrea to occupy the Yemeni island in question in order to further certain interests of its own?

[Mubarak] No, there is no collective Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi effort at all in this sphere. Ethiopia is making efforts. We sent envoys today to visit Eritrea and Yemen. Apart from this, I cannot answer your question about an Israeli role because I do not have any information at all about what you are saying.

[Correspondent] President Mubarak, Egypt is seeking a peace that is satisfactory to the Syrians and at the same responsive to Israeli demands. What can you tell us about the Egyptian role now that the negotiations are about to be resumed? As we bid farewell to 1995, what do you expect the new year to bring now that the negotiations are to be resumed? Do you expect the two countries to sign a peace agreement next year prior to the U.S. and Israeli elections?

[Mubarak] President al-Asad is here and he can tell you what he expects. We always discuss things with our Syrian brothers and if we are asked to do anything, we will do it without any need to make public the role we are playing. The United States is playing a major role that we cannot deny.

[Correspondent] Could we hear President al-Asad's expectations about this issue?

[Al-Asad] It is difficult to speculate on specific things now. As I said a short time ago, there is agreement to resume the negotiations and explore the prospects for reaching a solution, which is desired by both sides. That is why I said a short time ago that I cannot know how far the two sides will be able to go. There are no specifics.

[Correspondent] President Mubarak, do you believe that Shim'on Peres' government is serious about moving ahead with the peace on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks and does it have the desire and ability to do that?

[Mubarak] Judging by all the signs we can see and the experience we have had with them, I believe that they are serious about peace.

[Correspondent] A full peace in return for full withdrawal? How willing is Syria to accept this principle?

[Al-Asad] It was actually Syria which proposed this issue. They wish to cooperate with more openness. This is what we understood during our meeting with Christopher and the U.S. peace team. This is the conclusion we drew and this is what was conveyed to us. You can see by the statements made that it is possible to draw the conclusion which I have mentioned to you.

Baraq Accepts al-Asad's No 'Precondition' Talks

TA2412062895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq arrived in Cairo for his first visit to Egypt and will confer with President Mubarak on 25 December. He was received at the airport by his counterpart 'Amr Musa, who gave him an initial report on the talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad a few hours earlier. Our correspondent Arye Gus is on the phone from Cairo. After meeting with President Mubarak, al-Asad voiced optimism. Is that the picture on the eve of the opening of negotiations near Washington?

[Gus] Yes, if we take into account al-Asad's remarks. Foreign Minister Baraq received an initial report, but was not too interested in going into what he heard yesterday until he hears a detailed report from 'Amr Musa at noon and in his meeting tomorrow with President Mubarak. Foreign Minister Baraq has several meetings scheduled for today. This is his first visit to Egypt and he wants to meet as many people as possible. He will meet with the agriculture minister and then parliamentary leaders, and after meeting with Musa at noon he will have lunch at the ambassador's residence with businessmen and intellectuals, which is important because there are not many opportunities for such meetings. [passage omitted]

On his way from the airport to the hotel, Musa gave Baraq an initial report on al-Asad's talks in Egypt.

[Begin recording] [Baraq] I do not want to refer to the initial update, certainly not from here, before I have updated the government. I think, however, that the Egyptians were told what the Americans have already heard. The Syrians are talking in a more open way and about a flexible and creative approach, and have given their people coming to the United States a wider mandate. But we will wait and see what happens at the talks in a few days. I believe that within a few weeks we will know whether we are entering a new track — one perhaps not short, but important — of significant talks with the Syrians.

[Gus] President al-Asad said in Cairo today that the negotiations are being resumed without preconditions, but is the Syrian demand for a withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines not a precondition?

[Baraq] I accept President al-Asad's wording — without preconditions — on both sides, of course. [end recording]

[Gus] Al-Asad's remarks are therefore interesting because it is the first time he has spoken since Christopher's visit to the region and the announcement about the resumption of the negotiations. [passage omitted]

Cairo Radio Cites Baraq

NC2412084095 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0800 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Arriving in Cairo last night, Israeli Foreign Minister Baraq described Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's statements in Cairo yesterday as positive and said they reflect a flexible Syrian stance.

He added that the future of negotiations with Damascus will become clear in the weeks ahead.

Musa, Baraq Chair Egyptian-Israeli Talks in Cairo

NC2412112195 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1055 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 24 Dec (MENA)—A session of Egyptian-Israeli talks opened at the Foreign Ministry at noon today. The Egyptian side was led by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and the Israeli side by Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who is currently visiting Egypt.

The talks dealt with the latest developments in the Middle East peace process in light of progress on the Syrian-Israeli track. Intense talks are scheduled to begin on this track in the United States on Wednesday [27 December].

The conferees also discussed bilateral ties and ways to consolidate them in various spheres.

Baraq arrived in Cairo last night on a two-day visit to Egypt.

Hold News Conference

NC2412191995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1530 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Report on news conference by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq in Cairo on 24 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 24 Dec (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has said that his first round of talks with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq was serious with the two sides exchanging views on all topics of discussion.

At a joint news conference he and Baraq held at the end of their talks today, Musa said there is progress in the general atmosphere of the peace process. Any details about the Syrian-Israeli negotiations are up to the two directly involved sides, he said, noting that a full withdrawal from the Golan is a basic Syrian demand.

For his part, Baraq said Egypt plays a basic role in the region, contributing to the peace process and remaining determined to proceed with it. He expressed his belief that Egypt will continue to have a basic role to play in the future, after peace has been established.

At the beginning of the conference, 'Amr Musa welcomed the Israeli foreign minister and said their talks had dealt with several important issues concerning the peace process, regional relations, and bilateral ties. He said they had exchanged views on various topics. He described the meeting as "fruitful" and said the talks between the two sides will resume this evening and tomorrow, adding that President Husni Mubarak will receive Baraq tomorrow, Monday [25 December].

Asked whether Syria is ready to sign a peace treaty with Israel without waiting a final solution to the Palestine question, 'Amr Musa stressed that President Hafiz al-Asad is interested in the peace process and in its activation on the known bases. These bases, he pointed out, are comprised of a complete withdrawal in return for a complete peace—that is, all for all. He expressed optimism about the new developments on the Syrian-Israeli track and stressed that progress is generally in the air. He said details about the negotiations are being left to the two sides that are directly concerned (Israel and Syria), and that full withdrawal from the Golan is the main issues for Syria. On the basis of this withdrawal, he said, progress can be achieved in other areas.

Asked what he expects from Syria during the coming negotiations, Ehud Baraq said peace with Syria is strategic for both sides, who must understand each other's interests. He said he expects flexibility during the negotiations and for all topics to be discussed in a more open way. We must wait to see what will happen at the talks, he said. Baraq reaffirmed the importance of the U.S. role in the Syrian-Israeli talks. He said talks with the Syrians is a bilateral issue but a U.S. contribution may have a positive impact.

Asked if Israel is ready to abandon the idea of ground-based early-warning stations on the Golan, Baraq said: All I can say is that we are open to it. We need security arrangements and an early-warning system to secure and protect any peace agreement. He said all these measures can be put together with many ideas, but nothing can be decided except after the talks.

On a timetable for the negotiations, the Israeli foreign minister expressed hope that talks with Syria and Lebanon will be completed, but said he cannot give any timetable. It is too early to make predictions; this also depends on the other side, he said. He said he believes the time is right for other Arab countries, such as the Gulf states, to join the peace process. But he said no date can be set for establishing relations with countries like Libya, Iran, and Iraq. He hoped, however, that this will be possible soon.

On the possibility of raising the level of the talks between the Syrians and the Israelis, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said: We do not rule this out in the near or distant future. Everything depends on proposals, he said. If sound proposals are made and progress is achieved, then this is not unlikely, but if the proposals fail to lead to progress, then we rule this out.

Asked what Egypt thinks of Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' statement that Israel is ready to enter into negotiations over its nuclear weapons after the achievement of peace, 'Amr Musa said Egypt welcomes the statement. This is a good beginning on this vital issue, but many relevant details are needed, he said.

On the same subject, the Israeli foreign minister said it is not important to delve into details now, as there are more pressing issues on the agenda, including the achievement of peace with Syria and Lebanon and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Arab Maghreb and Arab Gulf countries.

Commenting on this, 'Amr Musa said: "We have to look forward on this issue. We, of course, discussed it with the Israeli foreign minister because it is an important issue. We have to establish a healthy atmosphere for a good future in the Middle East."

Musa said Egypt will continue to pursue this issue during discussions, and he expressed his belief that a solution will be found to this problem and to all other major issues.

Asked whether Israel will agree to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or if it has other ideas on how to eliminate its nuclear weapons, Baraq said he did not think this was the right time or place to discuss this matter in detail. He said he did not believe this subject to be the most important or pressing item on the Middle East agenda.

Here, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stressed: This issue is of utmost importance to us. It was the first subject we discussed today. We agreed with what the Israeli foreign minister said, and we will discuss this subject in the not distant future to see how we can deal with it and make progress on it.

Musa once again stressed that Egypt insists on a solution to this issue and said: We believe that the future of the region and the future of peace will not be safe as long as a nuclear program exists. Baraq commented: We want to concentrate on discussing the urgent problems on the agenda. The dialogue with 'Amr Musa on this topic was merely a discussion, not official negotiations.

On the Egyptian POW's issue, Musa said this was discussed by President Husni Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres during the latter's recent visit to Cairo. He said Peres has already appointed a general to investigate the matter. We are waiting the results, he said.

On Israel's role in igniting the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict, Baraq denied any link between his country and what is going on in that region. He stressed that Israel has no role in the conflict.

On the recent Israeli-Russian military agreement, Baraq said Russia is playing a role not far from the Middle East. He said he was glad at the establishment of gradual relations between Israel and Russia. He said Israeli-Russian relations are not directed against anyone, nor are they meant to accelerate the arms race. These relations are primarily related to economic cooperation on defense issues, he said.

Mubarak Receives Israeli Foreign Minister Baraq

NC2512140095 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak received Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq at the Presidential Palace this morning. Also attending the meeting were Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni, and Israeli Ambassador to Egypt David Sultan.

After the meeting Foreign Minister Musa said the talks with the Israeli foreign minister were positive. He noted that there are differences in Egyptian-Israeli views on the Israeli nuclear program. He said that Egypt's stance is clear on this issue. It stresses the need to discuss it. He said that the Israeli nuclear program will be discussed during the meetings of the multiparty armament committee. He noted that Israel's view is that discussion of the nuclear issue must be postponed until a comprehensive peace is achieved. He noted that Egypt's view is that this issue must be discussed so that a comprehensive peace can be achieved. He noted that if the Egyptian view is not taken into consideration, everything may come to a standstill. He said the Egyptian stance on this issue will not change. He said: Our view is that there is a need to discuss the issue on the bilateral or trilateral level or in any way that settles it.

Asked about Syrian views on establishing peace in the Middle East, Musa said that Syria is seeking peace and that President al-Asad has stressed the unequivocal Syrian stance on peace, noting that there are many signs confirming this stance.

Musa pointed out that the talks between President Mubarak and the Israeli foreign minister dealt with the peace process in the Middle East and bilateral relations. After the meeting Baraq said he held fruitful and good talks with President Mubarak. He noted that Prime Minister Peres has entrusted him to brief President Mubarak on the Israeli stance on the peace process and the peace talks. He said he heard President Mubarak's views on the various aspects of the peace process and discussed the development of bilateral relations. Baraq left Cairo this afternoon after a two-day visit during which he was received by President Mubarak and Foreign Minister Musa.

Israel's Baraq Meets Parliament Speakers

NC2412120995 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1137 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 24 Dec (MENA)—Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq has emphasized Egypt's clout, saying its leadership of the region is undeniable. He praised President Husni Mubarak's role in advancing the peace process. Baraq made his remarks at a meeting with People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Ahmad Fathi Surur today. Attending the meeting were Muhammad 'Abdallah, chairman of the People's Assembly Foreign Relations Committee; Israel's Ambassador in Cairo David Sultan; and Counselor Sami Mahran, secretary general of the People's Assembly.

Dr. Surur asserted the eagerness of the Egyptian Government and people to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East and honor the Palestinian people's rights.

Consultative Council Speaker Dr. Mustafa Kamal Hilmi met Baraq and his delegation today. They discussed efforts to advance the Middle East peace process on various tracks and the importance of pursuing these efforts on the Syrian-Israeli and the Lebanese-Israeli tracks.

Israel's Baraq Interviewed on Talks, Region

NC2612092495 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic
0740 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Interview with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by Halah Hashish in Cairo — live or recorded, in English]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Hashish] Mr. Foreign Minister, welcome to Egypt and the Egyptian television news sector.

[Baraq] I really am thankful for the hospitality. We feel that Egypt throughout history has been a major player and leader in the Middle East and the region. And we are very satisfied from a gradually emerging cooperation between our two countries.

[Hashish] You held talks with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and this morning with President Husni Mubarak and with senior officials in Egypt. Could you tell me first about your meeting with President Mubarak, the main topics you discussed and did they include the negotiations between Syria and Israel that will be held in the United States very soon and, if there are certain points of disagreement between Syria and Israel which you think that President Mubarak could bring the views closer?

[Baraq] I was asked by Prime Minister Peres to update President Mubarak about our position in regard to the Syrian-Israeli negotiations. I think that it is not a coincidence but in the example of the importance of Egypt that President al-Asad also came here to update and to exchange views with the president. We know that President Mubarak was a determined supporter of peace in the Middle East and the leading figure in helping the partners to come together. And I believe that Egypt will have a role when the time comes to bring other Arab countries from North Africa and from the Arab Peninsula to join the table.

I believe that direct negotiations between us and the Syrians in the presence of the Americans are very important. We hope that the kind of flexibility that al-Asad promised to show will show up in the negotiation itself.

[Hashish] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres announced his agreement with Hafiz al-Asad, the Syrian president, about the total principle of land for peace, comprehensive peace. On this [basis], there will be resumption of talks the end of this month. So, what exactly is the interpretation of Israel to this principle of all land for comprehensive peace?

[Baraq] I think that we should enter the negotiation without preconditions on both sides. We are ready to be very sensitive and careful to listen to the Syrian demands. But we think that all the problems should be dealt with simultaneously. Namely, the quality of peace, the openness of relations, the normalization, the cooperation on many areas and, as a result of it, the nature of security arrangements and the depth of withdrawal. I don't think that it will be appropriate to describe the exact depth of withdrawal before we hear from the Syrians to what extent they are ready to provide us with full, comprehensive, and open peace.

[Hashish] Hafiz al-Asad said that he is ready to have full diplomatic relations with Israel the moment the troops withdraw from the Golan Heights. So, what would your offer be; could you say that the price for peace would be the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from the Golan

Heights as Shim'on Peres said before that there should be a price for peace?

[Baraq] The late prime minister, the assassinated Rabin, said that the depth of withdrawal will commensurate with the depth of peace. We are now at a stage of real [changes thought] very open to hear from the Syrians. I believe that if they will be ready to full open normalization with all its aspects, for the inclusion of other countries or visions for other countries to come in, for a kind of way to be found to let Israel and Lebanon open negotiations on peace, and to deal with problems like terror and water and so on, I believe that we will be ready to take far-reaching calculated risk in order to let it happen. And it includes both the kinds of security arrangements that we obviously need to insure our people and the depth of withdrawal that we will consider. I am quite optimistic that an opportunity had been created and in a way, with the support of the Americans and with the backing from the background of Egypt that the two sides will try in an open manner to come together and put all the problems on the table and try to solve them or to reach some compromise.

[Hashish] On security arrangements, what's the nature of the security arrangements you think that should be done between Syria and Israel?

[Baraq] It has to include a variety of things: demilitarized zones, a kind of diluted deployment areas, a kind of hotline between commanders on both sides, exchange of visitors, kind of inspection, sharing of intelligence material and photographs from the air maybe provided by the Americans, kind of early warning arrangements or system. But all these things should be discussed between the sides. We should understand what are the Syrian [word indistinct] in regard to a security arrangements. We expect them to hear our problems. And I believe that together, with good will, we have a good chance of creating the structure that will be satisfying for both sides.

[Hashish] You announced that the Israeli nuclear program is not top priority for the Israeli government and that the priorities are given to peace and to having diplomatic relations with other Arab countries as well. Do you think that an Israeli nuclear program would help to accelerate the peace process or that it would create an atmosphere of trust and confidence with those Arab countries in the area?

[Baraq] You put our position better than I can put it. I should make it clear that whatever we have or have not has nothing to do with our relations with Egypt. We have peace with Egypt. We never think in terms of creating deterrence against Egypt, since we are in peace. But there are some other threats from countries like Libya, Iraq, or Iran that we Israelis should take into account, since we are ultimately responsible for the future of our children and grandchildren and the security of the country. That is the reason why we feel that the more appropriate way is to try to bring as many of the region's country on board of the peace train so that we will have peace with everyone and then we will be able to consider what to do about creating mass destruction weapons free zone.

[Hashish] Thank you very much, Mr. Foreign Minister.

[Baraq] Thank you all and best wishes to the whole Egyptian people. I hope that we all will be able to live in good neighborhood and have a peaceful, safe, and tranquil Middle East.

[Hashish] Thank you.

President Mubarak Telephones Eritrean Counterpart

NC2612082995 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0725 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Dec (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak made a telephone call to Eritrean President Isaias Afworki this morning [26 December].

Egyptian Minister of Information Safwat al-Sharif said that the latest developments in efforts to contain the situation between Yemen and Eritrea peacefully were discussed during the telephone call.

He added that the Eritrean president asserted during the call that his country has halted all military operations in the Hanish al-Kabir Island and that it has not carried out any military action in the past two days. Afworki also promised President Mubarak that Eritrea will maintain this stand and be committed to allowing every opportunity to reach a solution to the crisis.

Safwat al-Sharif said that yesterday President Mubarak received a telephone call from Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih. Al-Sharif added that the Yemeni president briefed President Mubarak on the latest developments in the situation on the Hanish Island, the cause of dispute between Yemen and Eritrea.

President Husni Mubarak sent messages to both sides as soon as the dispute arose. Also, Egypt is currently exerting intense efforts to contain the situation and find a peaceful solution to the dispute. These efforts are welcomed by Yemen and Eritrea.

Mubarak, Omani Minister Discuss Israel, Red Sea

NC2512114695 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak has received a verbal message from Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman dealing with bilateral relations. Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf Bin-'Alawi conveyed the message during a meeting with President Mubarak today. Speaking after the meeting, Bin-'Alawi stated that he briefed President Mubarak on the consultations held at the recent Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] meeting in Muscat. He added that the cooperation among Egypt, Oman, and the remaining GCC member states has priority in common Arab action. He added that he and President Mubarak discussed the topics to be raised during the coming meeting of the Damascus Declaration foreign ministers in Damascus as well as common Arab action within the Arab League.

[In a related report, Cairo MENA in Arabic at 1050 GMT on 25 December adds the following: "Asked about his expectations regarding the possibility of establishing diplomatic ties with Israel, the Omani foreign minister said: We are in contact with officials in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office. We will agree on the final points next month.

["Asked if peace between Syria and Israel would lead to a comprehensive settlement between Israel and all the Arab states, Bin-'Alawi said that completing all the links of peace, particularly between Syria and Israel, would be a major and important step, just as the Camp David Accord between Egypt and Israel was. He stressed that the negotiations must be concluded and a just and comprehensive peace achieved. As for Arab-Israeli relations and developing them, each country must decide on this independently, because it is a sovereign decision."]

[In another related, Cairo-datelined, report, Paris AFP in English at 0944 GMT on 25 December adds the following: "Israel will open a trade representation in Oman in January, its first diplomatic mission in the Gulf, Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf Bin-'Alawi said here on Monday [25 December].

["It was agreed in September to set up trade missions in Muscat and Tel Aviv, and we will complete that matter next month," Bin- 'Alawi told journalists after meeting Egyptian President Husni Mubarak.

["There are no relations (between the two countries) but there are contacts with Israeli officials and Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and we will agree on the final points next month,' Bin-'Alawi said without providing details.

["Bin-'Alawi's visit to Cairo coincided with a visit by Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who met Mubarak directly after his Omani counterpart. But Bin-'Alawi underlined that 'there was no meeting' between the two foreign ministers.

["The Omani foreign minister also urged Yemen and Eritrea to go to 'legal judgement' in their dispute over a Red Sea island which they both claim but which Eritrean troops captured last week."]

Defendants Reveal Plan To Attack Mubarak's Home

NC2512095795 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 18 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Khalid Salah and 'Abd-al-Fattah 'Abd-al-Mun'im]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Huckstep Higher Military Court will resume its sessions on Wednesday [20 December] to examine case number 12, the "Returnees From Sudan" case, in which 21 defendants are on trial. They are accused of preparing to carry out acts disturbing public security. They were caught in possession of explosives and weapons, which they intended to use in sabotage operations.

The defendants' confessions have revealed many surprises about the role of the Sudanese regime in financing and training all the terrorist groups abroad. According to their confessions, the sole link among the group leaders in Sudan, including Mustafa Hamzah, is Dr. Hasan al-Turabi's secretary. Following the assassination attempt on President Mubarak in Addis Ababa, al-Turabi held a series of meetings with Hamzah to continue cooperation between al-Turabi and the terrorist leaders. Al-Turabi told these leaders that Sudan would not hand over any terrorist to the Egyptian or Ethiopian authorities.

The defendants named the locations in forests inside Khartoum where they had received training. They were trained on models of several sites they were supposed to destroy. Plans were drawn up to attack the homes of several Egyptian officials, including President Mubarak. The plan of attack on President Mubarak's home was called the final operation. The defendants revealed that Mustafa Hamzah, the leader of the organization, had outlined several plans to be carried out before the final operation. Toward that end, he prepared 120 terrorists to be sent out in batches. But the first batch fell into the hands of the security agencies. The first plan was to destroy vital installations in Cairo. On the successful completion of the first plan, Hamzah was scheduled to send out the next batch, made up of 50 terrorists, to assassinate senior officials, including the interior, information, and foreign ministers as well as several opposition leaders. As for the final plan, the operation against President Mubarak, 50 members of the organization were prepared for this operation.

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi Condemns King Husayn's Statements

LD2412235195

[FBIS Editorial Report] Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic at 2030 GMT on 24 December carries a 73-minute recording of a speech given by Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, which he delivered on 24 December, after attending a huge rally in Wadi al Shati', marking the 82d anniversary of the battle of Mahrugah against the Italian invaders.

Al-Qadhdhafi at first praises the Libyan masses and heroic people who fought the Italian invaders. He also lauds all the sacrifices of the people and recalls a number of battles against the Italian colonialists. He then warns against the possibility of another attack and scheme by NATO to occupy Libya, and urged Libyans to be ready for such a probability.

He says that Libyans are for peace but against surrender, and recalls that the so-called Middle East peace process is a fallacy and says the following:

"Where is the solution they talk about? Here are the Palestinian people, with 30,000 Palestinians who are present in Libya and their return to Palestine is forbidden. There are 300,000 Palestinians imprisoned in Syria in camps of suffering and despair and who are forbidden to return to Palestine. There are 300,000 Palestinians in the camps of misery in Lebanon and who are forbidden to return to Palestine. There are 1.5 million Palestinians under the hateful Jordanian rule and who are forbidden to return."

He then condemns King Husayn's statements on his wish to grant Jordanian citizenship to the Palestinians living in Jordan, and says the following: "Yesterday, the ruler of Jordan said: We are ready to grant Jordanian citizenship to the Palestinians in Jordan. We told you that there was a Zionist-American program to make the Palestinians settle in the countries where they are present and grant them the citizenship of the countries in which they are present so that Palestine remains without people and will remain just for the Jews and the Israelis. This has started and has become blatant. He said yesterday: I am ready to grant the Israeli identity to the Palestinians. This is the biggest crime to be committed by the ruler of Jordan when he grants citizenship to the Palestinians in Jordan."

He recalls the Arab League's resolutions not to grant citizenship to Palestinians, and mentions the Israeli nuclear arsenal and the need to destroy it.

He then condemns the Jordanian ruler's statements on his wish to join NATO, saying: "When the ruler of Jordan says: I want to join NATO. Imagine Jordan becoming a member of NATO. Against whom is it to fight? Against whom is it to use NATO? Is it against the so- called Israel? No, he is friends with Israel, they have become close friends. Thus, against whom is he to fight with NATO? He will fight Syria, Egypt, and Iraq."

He then attacks the Jordanian king's statements on Iraq and says the following:

"The ruler of Jordan has the insolence to say: Iraq must be divided into three states and become a federal union. He thus ignored the people and territory of Iraq."

He recalls how Husayn's grandfather was made the ruler of Iraq. He then urges the Iraqi people to respond with force to the Jordanian king's statements and said the following: "We now incite and address a call to the Iraqi people: The Iraqi people must go beyond their government and army and must carry machine-guns, rocket launchers, and rifles and attack these dens, in which there is conspiracy against the unity of Iraq. The Iraqi people has the right to attack Jordan and destroy this den. The Iraqi people cannot be humiliated more and suffer more than what is taking place now. They have suffered more than enough. The solution will be for the Iraqi people to fight, a guerrilla war, in the whole region around them. They will not lose more than they have and will not be harmed more than they have been. The Iraqi people, and not the Iraqi Government or army, who are just like all the other defeated Arab armies, might be forced to turn into a volcano and armed gangs and destroy the whole region. We incite them, back them, and encourage them to do so. O brothers, this infringement is a very serious threat to the unity of the Arab nation."

He says that the Libyans wanted to be free on their land and reiterates the shameful surrender of the Arab leaders.

He then condemns the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] leaders who did not say a word about the need to destroy the Israeli nuclear arsenal, but called for the destruction of Iraqi weapons. In this respect, he says the following: "Can you imagine brothers, all the Gulf leaders met and opened their proceedings with an official speech and closed their session with a closing speech and did not mention at all Palestine or the Palestinian people, or even a Palestinian refugee. They had a paragraph on the destruction of nuclear and mass destruction weapons.

We were pleased when they talked about that and we said: This is good, the Gulf leaders call on the Israelis to destroy their atomic bombs, which constitute a threat to the Gulf and the environment. We were surprised, with great regret and disappointment, by the fact that they were talking about Iraq. They said: Iraq must be destroyed and its nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological weapons must be destroyed and the Gulf must be free from mass destruction weapons. Why you lot did not say a word about the Israelis and say: This also applies to the Israelis. Their tongue does not pronounce their name. They cannot do so. The chairman of the GCC summit conference and the tongue of the one who reads the final communique became blocked and could not say: And Israel. He could say it because the Israelis are now the masters of the Arabs in the Middle East. The Arabs are the slaves of the Israelis."

He recalls once again the shameful surrender of Arabs to the Israelis, the farce of the Palestinian elections, and the fallacy of the so-called Middle East peace process. He then says that the Libyans were the enemies of surrender and recalled the U.S. raid against Libya and warned once again against the possibility of another attack.

Al-Qadhdhafi on Jordan's Demand To Join NATO

LD2312200195 Tripoli JANA in English
1448 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al Kanoun [Dec] 23, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — During his meeting with Arab advocates in Tripoli yesterday, the leader of the revolution [Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi] said 'We heard something very strange. The government of Jordan or King Husayn of Jordan is demanding demanding [as received] to join NATO. The climate became conducive for the emergence of weird ideas. Thus we began to hear about strange things including a demand by an Arab state to join NATO.

The leader asked 'As long as the Israeli enemy became a good friend, what is then the meaning of linking Jordan to NATO? Does this mean that Jordan wants to defend NATO or need its protection?. This means an aggression on Syria, Iraq and Egypt.

He declared 'On behalf of this nation and its right to live in dignity, we will never retreat one inch from our steadfastness even if they pour on us nuclear bombs, doubled the sanctions and regardless of their muscle flexing and treats against us.. we, in Libya, consider ourselves as the vanguard of a nation being humiliated and its future endangered. We will resist steadfastly until the other vanguards of the Arab nation join us. But this situation will not continue.

The leader of the revolution added 'Let the Arab rulers continue to expose themselves even before children so as to lose all credibility. This will speed up their end. Let them run towards the Israeli capitulating to them and endearing themselves to them. This shows the the truth about the Americans. I feel happy whenever an Arab ruler is exposed.. it is shame to see some Arab governments supplying the enemy with energy, welcoming the Israeli control over the Arab region and the immediate execution of the orders issued by Washington without any discussion. If the American president summons by phone Arab rulers, they would not hesitate to attend immediately and evryone of them would go [to] Washington without any discussion.. the other shameful act happened in Jerusalem when Arab rulers were cried after the death of terrorist Rabin. They were exposed even in the eyes of Arab children. Every child and woman cursed the humiliating stance of Arab rulers when they cried at the death of the biggest killer of Arabs.

JANA on U.S. Decision 'Aimed' at European Oil Firms

LD2412194495 Tripoli JANA in English
1856 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al Kanoun [Dec] 24, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — Reports said that America issued a draft decision aimed primarily at the European companies working in the oil sector in the Great Jamahiriyah in a move which observers consider as punishment to Europe for its stances opposing the American plans aimed at the realisation of American interests in the first place.

Reports pointed out that the draft decision adopted by the American Senate deprives the European companies working in oil and gas sectors in the Great Jamahiriyah from continuing their major projects and developing the projects they are executing in the Great Jamahiriyah which inflict colossal losses on these companies hence directly affecting the European economic interests in a process of American blackmail which is very clear to the European countries which sought to take stances independent and free from American poltical and economic pressures.

Observers in oil and economic matters are unanimous in stressing that the draft decision was a painful blow to Europe and exposed the American intentions towards Europe and gave due regard only to American economic interests which began to shrink before the stance taken by the European countries in a bid to liberate the European economy from American control and the ferocious American oil and economic companies to seize all control over the world economy.

Ronald Reagan's Present Health Condition Viewed

LD2312193495 Tripoli JANA in English 1414 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, al Kanoun [Dec] 23, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — The daughter of former President Reagan of America revealed that Alzamier [Alzheimer] disease he has been suffering from has worsened so much so he can no longer recognize his relatives and visitors. In a press interview published in London yesterday the daughter of the former American president said that the years he spent in power speeded up his infection by this serious disease and that it was his wife Nancy who was running matters on his behalf because the illness affected him during his years of office forcing him not to appear on public occasions. However, the medical reports had asserted that Reagan was suffering from a disease making him forget things around him to a stage of total madness.

The English newspaper 'THE TIMES' quoted reports as saying that the doctors treating Reagan expect his health to deteriorate further in the forthcoming days. The former American president has already undergone a series of surgeries to remove malicious bits [as received] in a bid to treat him from the council [as received] of the colon in 1986, cancer in his prostate and skin cancer in 1987. Also liquid was removed from his head following his injury in a violent incident and after he was hit by a bullet on his heart during an infamous assassination attempt.

During a massive rally at the leaders [Reagan's] house on 15th. al Tayr marking the day of confrontation and courage of the Libyan Arab people against the aborted American Atlantic barbaric aggression, the leader of the revolution admitted himself and with his handwriting that he was suffering from Alzamier disease for which there is no treatment and would lead to madness which means that Reagan during that time was suffering from the symptoms and a prelude to the disease I therefore don't believe that the Libyan public prosecutor will continue to insist on bringing Reagan to trial for his crimes because he is no longer qualified to stand trial due to his effects of madness. [as received] This was written by Reagan with his own hand and it is possible for you to inspect it if it is readily available to the Libyan media it might feature on the newspapers tomorrow. The second man who was exercising dictatorship with Reagan by passing the American Congress and ignoring the will of the American people was the head of his intelligence service, called Casey who died from a brain disease. This means that this person too was suffering from the same disease during that period. Look at the ill mentalities which have been governing America and acting this manner.

Regrettably, America's agents in the Arab homeland were supporting the action of these mad officials believing that Reagan and Casey were of sound mind. These agents did not wish to know that their master Reagan was suffering from Alzamier and Casey from brain tumour. Shame on Arab agents who use to applaud the policies of Reagan and supporting them whithout saying that these policies were unreasonable and mad policies of a man wishing to destroy earth and arming the space spending all the budget of America on exhibitionist war acts while he did not know anything about war. He used to play with fleets. We use to say Reagan was mad and suffering from illness but others use to laugh at us for saying this.

Nation of Islam Delegation Lauds al-Qadhdhafi

LD2212183795 Tripoli JANA in English 1809 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli 22 December Jamahariya News Agency — The delegation of the Nation of Islam in America which recently visited Libya paid tribute to the leader of the revolution and the Libyan Arab people and expressed their thanks for the congratulations extended by the leader to Louis Farrakhan for his success achieved by the march of two million black people in Washington.

During the interview conducted by the voice of the greater Arab homeland, the voice of the revolutionary committees the delegation expressed the appreciation of the Nation of Islam Movement in America for the role performed by the great Al Fateh Revolution and its leader towards the causes of Islam and Muslims worldwide.

The delegation lauded the support and backing of the leader of the revolution and the Great Jamahariya for the struggle launched by blacks and Muslims in America to achieve freedom, equality and justice.

The delegation confirmed that the presence of ten million Muslims in America in addition to 40 million blacks will provide a pressure lobby group capable of transforming the course of American policy in favor of humanity and the power of good and virture and to counter the Jewish lobby which controlls American policy and capable of achieving victory for themselves and for the whole world, particularly the nations of the third world which are suffering from colonisation and injustice.

The delegation revealed that the leader of the revolution was able, despite the unfair sanctions imposed on the

Great Jamahariya, to defy america with all courage and to contract his brother Louis Farrakhan, the brother of the Nation of Islam in America and to congratulate him on the march of two million blacks.

The delegation praised the expertise and know-how in various areas acquired by Muslims and blacks in America who lack nothing but unification of their ranks and the mobilisation of their resources and their efforts to acquire the capability of influencing and changing American policy.

The delegation called on all black and other ethnic minorities in America to gain inspiration of the revolutionary leader, Colonel Muammar Al Qadhdhafi, to play and effective role and a loud voice of influence in America.

The delegation of the Nation of Islam in America denounced the unfair sanctions imposed on the Great Jamahariya and confirmed that they will work through the American elections which will be conducted next year to influence American policy and change it as the majority of the American people do not endorse the American Government's policy and stand against it.

Prince Reaffirms Commitment to 'Democratic' State

MM2112133595 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 21 Dec 95 p 6

[Unattributed report: "Al-Sanusi Committed to Establishing 'Democratic State'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — Prince Idris al-Sanusi has reaffirmed his commitment to try to establish "a pluralist, constitutional, and democratic state" in Libya. In a statement issued on the occasion of Libya's 45th anniversary of independence (next Sunday) he added that "the state of the independence era safeguarded the Libyans' dignity, respected human rights, protected the homeland..., and took into consideration neighborhood rights, brotherhood, and friendship and safeguarded them, earning the appreciation and respect of neighbors, brothers, and friends."

He said also that the Libyan Government during the independence era adopted "a balanced and wise foreign policy, matching the state's size and ambitions."

He criticized the 1 September 1969 coup which brought Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi to power. He said that Libya is now "under the burden of tyranny, injustice, and humiliation, where destinies are disregarded, nothing is sacred...and fortunes are squandered." He praised "our patient people...and their struggle against tyranny, despotism, and dictatorship." He reaffirmed "the resolve and determination to continue our struggle and earnest and diligent attempt to save the homeland...so that freedom, legitimacy, security, and dignity may be restored to the homeland and the citizen in a constitutional, democratic state where the law prevails and justice rules."

Morocco

Filali Urges Algeria To Clarify Stand on Sahara

LD2212132595 Rabat MAP in English 1243 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Dec. 22 (MAP) — Here follows the full text of the letter addressed by Moroccan prime minister and minister of foreign affairs and cooperation, Abdellatif Filali, to Algeria's foreign minister, Mohamed Salah Dembri:

"Excellency, the Moroccan authorities took note of the position that the Algerian government adopted concerning the UN secretary general's proposals aiming at accelerating the identification process in the Sahara, through a letter you sent to the president of the UN Security Council on December 6th 1995. This attitude is a surprisingly enough new reversal leading to consequences not only concerning the development of this issue but also at the level of inter-Maghreban relations.

Indeed, the behavior of the Algerian government on the Sahara issue has evolved in a particular way. Algerian authorities, both under the presidency of the late Houari Boumedienne or the [words indistinct] Chadli Bendjedid, have always proclaimed that Algeria had no territorial claim on the Sahara. On this basis, the late President Boumedienne had clearly supported the decolonization of the Sahara in the context of an understanding between Morocco and Mauritania at the 1972 African summit and especially at the 1974 Arab summit held in Rabat.

In the aftermath of the Green March and the signing of the Madrid tripartite agreement in November 1975, the Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] suddenly appeared as a liberation movement against the Spanish occupier and for the independence of the Sahara. In this regard, it would be useful to ask the ministry of the Spanish armies about the names of the Spanish soldiers injured or killed by this very Polisario.

Afterwards, to Morocco's astonishment, Algeria stood, under the cover of the defense of liberation movements and self-determination, as a fierce defender of the Polisario. This position, which the Algerian authorities presented as being based only on the defense of some principles, has never convinced Morocco. It is mainly in a spirit of conciliation and so as not to jeopardize the future of our region that Morocco accommodated [words indistinct].

The adoption of the UN settlement plan on the Sahara and Algeria's acceptance of the status of observer had made it suppose that your country would finally facilitate the achievement of a solution to the Sahara issue without any ingerence [as received] or interference on its behalf.

Yet, by your letter to the chairman of the Security Council, Algeria, going beyond its status of observer, is adopting an attitude fundamentally modifying the position that the Algerian government seemed to have accepted and accredited. Thus, Algeria is questioning its observer status and openly stands as a directly concerned party in the Sahara issue.

This new situation is particular source of concern for Morocco that must draw all consequences. The government of the Kingdom of Morocco, therefore, considers that it is time the clarification took place and this radical change of Algeria's position were explained. Such position might harm the UN peace process in the Sahara and is likely to entail negative and regrettable repercussions in the Maghreb as a whole.

As a consequence, the Moroccan government requests that Algeria now [words indistinct] the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) - immediately stop the activities of the Maghreban institutions. Indeed, nothing lasting could be constructed on ambiguity, neither on the bilateral nor on the regional levels. A freezing of our Maghreban institutions - which we hope to be as short as possible - leading to a clear and peaceful horizon will undoubtedly be more salutary for the five countries of the Arab Maghreb than an ever increasing ambiguity.

Please accept, excellency, the expression of my deep respect".

Yassine Arrest Said To Show 'Incoherent' Policy

LD2212134495 Rabat MAP in English
1315 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Dec 22 (MAP) — The Moroccan Human Rights Organization (OMDH, independent) has called on Moroccan authorities to lift the administrative measure taken against the leader of the association of "al Adl wal Ihssane" (Justice and Charity) Abdessalam Yassine, under a house arrest at his home in Sale (a twin city of Rabat).

In a communique made public Friday, the OMDH considers the conflicting reports on the lifting and the maintaining of this measure as a proof of the "government incoherent policy in the human rights field".

A delegation led by the OMDH president paid a visit to the 67 year old Muslim fundamentalist who told them that within 48 hours he received from authorities two contradictory news, one putting an end to his house arrest and the other on its maintaining.

Abdessalam Yassine, an advocate of an Islamic society, preaching however a moderate Islam, has been under house arrest for nearly six years now. A writer of books on Islam, he had served prison terms in the past.

Sudan

Al-Bashir: Free Contest for Presidential Election

LD2412204095 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic
1600 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, 24 Dec — Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, president of the Republic, has stressed that nothing need be feared from the wide-ranging freedoms guaranteed by constitutional decree number 13, because the people will exercise their legitimate rights vigilantly and consciously. Replying to questions from journalists during a news conference today following the signing of constitutional decree number 13, Lieutenant General al-Bashir declared that the revolution will welcome whoever wishes to lead (?the nation) in accordance with (?the provisions) stipulated in the Constitution, adding that he has no objection to any leader of the dissolved parties wishing to contest in the elections.

In reply to a question on the revolution's attitude to the call for reconciliation in the light of the decree having been signed, al-Bashir said that whoever examines the way in which ministers, governors, and commissioners were appointed will find broad scope for reconciliation. He added: To us reconciliation means agreement on a program and many of those who participated in the implementation of the salvation [revolution's] programs came from all shades of political opinion in Sudan.

Lt. Gen. al-Bashir denied that the process of political restructuring has been rushed, as maintained by some, saying that the revolution had envisaged constitutional restructuring ever since its inception. He added that [word indistinct] elections held on the basis of the decree, there will be no scope for anyone, especially those roaming about abroad, to launch fabrications and rumors about books [as received], human rights and freedoms in Sudan.

Replying to a question on how the president of the republic will choose his deputies and aides, as stipulated by the decree, Lt. Gen. al-Bashir said the elected president will decide how his deputies will be appointed and through practice [words indistinct] the governors and commissioners. The salvation revolution was very experienced in determining standards and options.

Taha Denies Condemnation by African Nations

NC2412111395 Paris AFP in English
1024 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, Dec 24 (AFP)—Sudan denied on Sunday [24 December] that African nations had condemned it for backing terrorism in a meeting of foreign ministers in Ethiopia last week, the daily AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH reported.

"Except for Egypt and Ethiopia, no member of the (Organization for African Unity, OAU, suggested condemnation of Sudan, and all members spoke of terrorism in general terms," Sudanese Foreign Minister 'Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha said.

The Egyptian daily AL-AKHBAR said that the OAU's conflict prevention mechanism, meeting in Addis Ababa last Tuesday, had called on Khartoum to "stop supporting terrorism" and to hand over three suspects in the June attempt to kill Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Ethiopia.

Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin said at the session his country could "take the issue of Sudan's implication in terrorism to the UN Security Council if it did not extradite the terrorists it is sheltering."

But Taha, who attended the OAU session, said the mechanism had "agreed that the question of Ethiopia's request (for extradition) be resolved in an African framework without raising it at international forums."

Taha added that voting at the United Nations against Sudan's human rights record "has improved, especially among Arab states."

"Egypt was the only Arab country" to vote in favor of this year's UN report of rights abuses in Sudan, while "Saudi Arabia and Qatar this time voted in Taha said.

SPLA Agrees Terrorist Training Camps Exist

NC2312134595 Cairo MENA in English
1215 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nairobi, Dec 23—MENA—The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) under Dr. John Garang today said that what was included in statements by Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa before the Central Mechanism for the Settlement and Management of African disputes regarding the existence of camps for training terrorists in Sudan, is one hundred per cent right.

The SPLA media and culture secretary told MENA that SPLA has evidence and information that asserted the existence of four Egyptian extremist organisations that work from Sudanese soil.

The SPLA is also certain that there were extremist elements from Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and Palestine who are being trained in special camps and these elements aim at destabilising conditions in the aforementioned states, the SPLA official said.

He added a Sudanese governmental organisation styling itself Organisation of Islamic Call mobilises extremist elements from some African countries and work under the cloak of carrying out humanitarian and charitable work.

Government To Cooperate in Mubarak Attack Probe

EA2012223995 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 20 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The foreign minister, Ali Uthman Muhammad Taha, this afternoon returned to Khartoum from Ethiopia, having participated in the fifth meeting of the OAU's committee for conflict resolution in Africa.

His excellency made it clear that Sudan was called to the meeting to discuss the attack against the Egyptian leader in Addis Ababa, as well as developments in Liberia, Somalia and Burundi, and to follow up the outcome of the committee's emergency meeting.

He said the meeting discussed the attack against Mubarak, Ethiopia's demand to extradite the suspects who, it is assumed, took refugee in Sudan. He added that he had made it clear that those pieces of information were weak and lacked precision. We expressed, he said, our readiness to follow up investigations if other quarters cooperate with us. This position gave no chance to those states which attempted to condemn Sudan.

The resolution of the committee in this regard was characterized by maintaining the African nature of the conflict.

Minister on Return of 2,204 Ethiopian Refugees

NC2512091795 Paris AFP in English
0846 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, Dec 25 (AFP)—Sudan has returned more than 2,200 Ethiopian refugees to their country in the past 10 days, the deputy commissioner for refugees Muhammad Ahmad Husayn said on Monday [25 December].

The 2,204 refugees, the first of over 19,100 Ethiopians registered for repatriation, were taken to Ethiopia's northern province of Tigre from which they will be taken to their home regions, Husayn said.

Sudan has also moved 24,000 Eritreans back home "as part of the voluntary repatriation program", Husayn said, cited by the daily AL- RA'I AL-AKHAR.

Husayn appealed for international aid for the repatriations, saying, "the refugee problem is the responsibility of the world community, not just Sudan alone."

Sudan hosts a total of a million refugees from various countries, he added.

Khartoum also struck a deal with an airline company to bring home 1,000 Sudanese refugees from central Africa, Husayn said without identifying the company.

Yemen, GCC Consulting To Avoid Red Sea Disputes

LD2212130595 Riyadh SPA in English
1229 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Dec 22, SPA — Yemeni ambassador to Egypt Ahmad Luqman said consultations were underway between Yemen and the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] member states to avoid the Red Sea region disputes that might have an adverse impact on the future of stability and security in the region.

In a statement published by AL-RIYAD newspaper on Friday, Luqman reviewed dispute over the island of al-Hanish in the Red Sea and the unexpected Eritrean occupation of the island. Dispute over the island should never be viewed as an Arab-African dispute, but it should be viewed as a dispute between the two neigbouring countries: Yemen and Eritrea, he said.

Bahrain

Defense Minister on U.S. Presence, Threats

NC2312070995 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic
17 Dec 95 p 5

[Interview with Defense Minister Lieutenant General Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Ahmad Al Khalifah, by Sana' al-Sa'id in Bahrain; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Sa'id] Some people criticize the extensive U.S. presence in the region. They see it as unjustified and designed only to exploit oil resources and sell weapons to the Gulf countries.

[Al Khalifah] I do not think the Gulf countries purchase weapons simply to buy something from the United States. They buy weapons in line with the threat to which they are subjected. The threat determines the quantity and types of weapons bought. This has been recognized internationally for thousands of years. Arms purchases rise with the intensity of the threat and vice versa.

[Al-Sa'id] Who poses a threat?

[Al Khalifah] It could be any source. Iran might be a threat. It spends huge sums on weapons and has a large arsenal. Some countries believe that Iran is not a threat to them, but that country B or country C is the threat. It all depends on the size of the threat.

[Al-Sa'id] Iraq no longer poses a threat. I wonder why we should follow what the U.S. dictates to the region, for example, its claim that Iraq is still a threat. Saddam no longer controls even southern or northern Iraq. He is besieged in central Iraq and uses his security services merely to protect himself.

[Al Khalifah] I wish here to refer to the call for reconciliation by [Emirian President] Shaykh Zayid and his highness the Bahraini heir apparent's remarks about reconciliation and lifting the sanctions on Iraq. We hope things will return to normal. What happened in the past is enough.

[Al-Sa'id] Does Iraq now pose any threat to you?

[Al Khalifah] No. We do not believe it poses a threat. They say it does but we in Bahrain do not think Iraq is a threat to us.

[Al-Sa'id] People say numerous U.S. ships are using Bahrain as a port of call and that 30 U.S. military aircraft are stationed at a base in Bahrain.

[Al Khalifah] There is one ship. Our territorial waters do not have room for many ships to berth. We had several U.S. aircraft, fewer than 30, which we allowed the Americans to use for training. They came for training and are now leaving Bahrain. They did not come to be stationed indefinitely.

[Al-Sa'id] But are the extensive U.S. movements, including those of the Fifth Fleet, in the Gulf justified?

[Al Khalifah] We cannot prevent or limit the U.S. presence. The Americans do not seek anyone's permission, because they operate in international waters. No Bahraini ship can intercept a U.S. aircraft carrier in international waters. Countries like Iran or India can object to the number of U.S. ships in the region but we small nations are governed by our interests. If these forces are deployed in the region to protect the oil, a commodity that is very important to the region's nations themselves, then we cannot prevent them from doing so. But we tell them that protecting the oil comes in two stages. The first stage, that of production, is our responsibility. The refining and marketing of the oil, a process that involves its transfer from the Gulf region, is a responsibility in which the United States participates because it is a consumer and will not abandon its involvement. If they want to secure the oil supplies, we cannot prevent them. If we try, they will protect the oil supplies by force.

[Al-Sa'id] People say the United States is playing a major role in encouraging the differences between the neighbors in the Arab region in general and the Gulf in particular for the sake of oil revenue.

[Al Khalifah] First, who says this? If they have information then let them come forward. But to talk at random is unacceptable. As for Bahrain, I can say that our relations with the United States are good, because it has harmed us so far. But only God knows what the future holds. I hope that the motive for their actions is good.

But you must be cautious. They are not 100 percent our allies but they are the allies of interests. They may look at us in the same way they look at a barrel of oil, not as peoples, so that when the barrel is empty their look will change.

[Al-Sa'id] Are you worried by Israel's claims that Iran wants to possess nuclear weapons?

[Al Khalifah] This would be horrible were it true because of the danger to life. A reactor that is not well-managed is a worry.

The peaceful Chernobyl reactor caused a catastrophe. Just imagine what a military one would do. Was it not Israel that introduced nuclear weapons to the region? Israel was the first to introduce chemical and biological weapons and surface-to-surface missiles to the region. It has now brought us the nuclear weapon and God knows what it will bring later. The odd thing is that it seeks to deny access to those around it and confiscate everyone's right to any advanced technology, such as satellites. If anyone is encouraging Iran to proceed with such a project, then it is Israel. Hence, Israel must abandon its nuclear program, then Iran might abandon its program to possess nuclear weapons. Israel started it and planted the seed. It has made Iran want to do this.

[Al-Sa'id] Would you accept an Iranian role in Gulf security despite the doubts about it?

[Al Khalifah] We do not accept the word Gulf as a general term. There is the Arab Gulf and there is a Persian section. Iran has the right to a security role in its territorial waters and economic sectors where it will be responsible. As for our territorial waters and economic sectors, we are responsible for them and we do not want Iran to share this responsibility with us. We in turn do not want to share the responsibility with Iran in its waters. No one can ask to live in my house. A man's home is his castle.

[Al-Sa'id] Talking about the Gulf Cooperation Council, some people say Saudi Arabia is exercising hegemony over the other members.

[Al Khalifah] This is not true. On the contrary, Saudi Arabia exercises no hegemony. If Qatar fears this because of a border dispute with Saudi Arabia, well then, regrettably, Qatar itself is demanding a third of Bahraini territory. We are an archipelago in the Gulf with 33 islands, 14 of which are near the mainland. Qatar wants them all. This represents a third of Bahrain's territory and is contrary to reason and legitimacy. We told them this was impossible and that we would embark on a 100-year war with them before giving them one island, never mind all of them.

[Al-Sa'id] How could this dispute be contained through bilateral meetings and not through the International Court of Justice, as is the case now?

[Al Khalifah] We cannot give up our land. This is a fateful issue for Bahrain. These are our borders. We went with them to the UN, and Qatar accepted Bahrain's independence and sovereignty over these islands. These are our borders following Britain's departure from the Gulf. If we open the file on the borders, Qatar will be part of Bahrain too. Bahrain and Qatar were one country. They were divided by force by the Turks and the British. So if we open old files we will end up with numerous problems and complications.

[Al-Sa'id] What is the best way to ensure Bahrain's security in the long term?

[Al Khalifah] The security of Bahrain is part of the region's security. Our strength comes from our brothers in the Arab world and the Gulf. The policy of keeping Bahrain away from conflict and war is attributed to his highness the amir and his relations with these countries. We harbor no animosity toward any country, but some countries, such as Iran and Qatar, are bothering us over borders and our internal affairs, which we reject.

[Al-Sa'id] Why did not you try to resolve your dispute with Qatar under the umbrella of the GCC?

[Al Khalifah] Unfortunately, border disputes exist in other countries. God willing, this will be resolved through reason and dialogue, because you cannot leave it up to us, the military, to solve this problem. We hope the politicians will solve it through dialogue instead of leaving it to us, the defense ministers, to solve. The military have only one solution and that is why we hope it will be solved politically.

[Al-Sa'id] Some say the failure to implement the military part of the Damascus Declaration is the result of Saudi reservations.

[Al Khalifah] This is untrue. I do not believe Saudi Arabia would act in this manner. It has been agreed to implement the military part on a bilateral, not collective, basis because of the economic obligations. This is particularly so, since Saudi Arabia is assuming the greater financial burden, which amounts to billions [no currency specified], while countries such as Bahrain and Qatar pay nothing although they are under the same obligation. Thus, it was requested that military agreements be on a bilateral basis. We will leave it to our brothers, the foreign ministers, who will meet soon to discuss the whole thing.

Qatari Foreign Minister Asked To Postpone Visit

*NC2212193295 Paris AFP in English
1853 GMT 22 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, Dec 22 (AFP) - Bahrain has asked Qatar's foreign minister to postpone a visit to Manama scheduled for the end of the week, a government official said Friday [22 December].

"We have officially asked the Qatari authorities to postpone to a date to be fixed later the visit" by Sheikh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani, the official told AFP, asking to remain anonymous.

He said the request was made because of other commitments Bahrain had.

The Qatari minister announced Tuesday he would tour members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) except Saudi Arabia to discuss his country's opposition to the pact's new Saudi secretary general.

Sheikh Hamad said he would visit Bahrain, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait at the end of the week to "inform their leaders of Qatar's point of view."

Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, walked out of a GCC summit on December 6 in an unprecedented protest against the appointment of a Saudi diplomat, Jamil al-Hujaylan, as secretary general at the expense of a Qatari candidate.

The Qatari foreign minister then said he would boycott all GCC meetings attended by al-Hujaylan.

Ministers Concerned Over Eritrean 'Armed Aggression'

*JN2412154095 Manama WAKH in Arabic
1225 GMT 24 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 24 Dec (WAKH)—The Bahraini Council of Ministers has expressed deep concern for the Eritrean armed aggressions against the Yemeni Hanish al-Kabir island in the southern Red Sea, and said these aggressions cause tension and threaten security and stability in the region.

In its regular weekly meeting held in Manama today and headed by His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah, crown prince and acting prime minister, the Council of Ministers called for a return to the previous situation and for employing amicable and peaceful means to resolve regional differences.

In a statement following the meeting, Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa', minister for Council of Ministers affairs, said that Shaykh Hamad reviewed a number of developments in the regional and international arenas. [passage omitted]

He said the council approved Bahrain's participation in the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration states, due to be held in the Syrian capital on 27-28 December. The council also approved Bahrain's participation in the ministerial conference on economic assistance to the Palestinians due to be held in Paris next January. Bahrain's delegation to this conference will be led by the foreign minister. [passage omitted]

Former Amir of Qatar Arrives for Visit

*NC2512165795 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1645 GMT 25 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 25 Dec (MENA)—Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, former amir of Qatar, arrived in Manama today on a visit to Bahrain as part of a tour of the Gulf states.

The GULF NEWS AGENCY said Amir of Bahrain Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah was on hand to welcome him. He was also welcomed by Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah, heir apparent and acting prime minister.

Shaykh Khalifah is accompanied by Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Hamad Al Thani, Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Hamad Al Thani, Shaykh Jasim Bin-Khalifah Bin- Hamad Al Thani, Dr. 'Isa Ghanim al-Kawari, and Shaykh Khalifah Bin- 'Ali Al Thani.

Kuwait

Shaykh Sa'd: War With Iraq 'Not Over Yet'

*LD2412235795 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1952 GMT 24 Dec 95*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 24 Dec — Kuwaiti Heir Apparent and Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah has demanded the states which supported Iraq during its invasion of Kuwait in 1990 [take] "a new stance in which they call upon the Iraqi regime to implement the relevant international resolutions."

In a press interview conducted with him by the Egyptian writer Mufid Fawzi in Kuwait and which will be published here tomorrow by the newspaper AL-'ALAM AL-YAWM he reaffirmed that he is still unsure about the Iraqi regime's intentions since "the tendency of evil and aggression is deeply rooted in the soul of the Iraqi regime which works night and day to hoard more weapons including weapons of mass destruction."

"I believe the war is not over yet and the aggressive intentions are still in the head of the Iraqi regime's president in Baghdad even though the Gulf, Arab, and international circumstances are not giving him the opportunity to realize those intentions," he added but he went on to say: "This does not mean that we relax or feel safe."

Answering a question on Kuwait's attitude toward the states which supported the Iraqi aggression in 1990 he said: "Not all states' resolutions are eternal constants which are unchangeable or unmodifiable if their causes change. But the interest of Kuwait and the people of Kuwait comes first and the Kuwaiti citizen cannot forget Saddam's crimes easily." He added: "We have not said that we have closed the doors but we have said that the states which took a 'supporting stance' toward the Iraqi regime must have a new stance, that is to demand the the ruling regime in Baghdad implement all the Security Council's resolutions relevant to its aggression against the State of Kuwait 'without hesitation' and speedily release all Kuwaiti PoWs."

In another development Heir Apparent and Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah said that the strength of the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council "lies in closer union not just for Kuwait but for the future of all the member states."

Answering a question about the Gulf border disputes and how to solve them Shaykh Sa'd said: "[The border disputes can be solved] with more meetings and exchange of opinion frankly and clearly taking into consideration that it is not the interest of a certain state but it is the interest and future of this region."

Asked if reconciliation is tied to the departure of the ruler of the Iraqi regime, he said: "We are not against the Iraqi people. When we felt that a number of Iraqis in the north needed someone to help them with food, clothes, and medicine we responded without delay. Our steps were taken from a purely humanitarian perspective".

Regarding his evaluation of the performance of the current National Assembly Shaykh Sa'd said: "I do not deny that it has made achievements in some areas but we must not be diverted from the issues of the country's security with marginal issues which take up efforts and studies." "We must not let secondary issues keep us from Kuwait's security and its destiny," he added.

In reply to a question about the invitation of the President of the United Arab Emirates [words indistinct] Shaykh Sa'd said: "I know His Highness Shaykh Zayid very well [words indistinct] would have known his aspirations and what he wants for the states of this region and the Arab world [words indistinct] for his kind heartedness with what he had heard from some Iraqis about the conditions which the Iraqi people are living. But Shaykh Zayid undoubtedly knows who is the cause of this suffering or this famine if there was a famine for the Iraqi people."

On the possibility that some funding for terrorism is taking place under the cover of charity work in the Gulf Shaykh Sa'd said: "What is happening in Egypt because of terrorism hurts us immensely. We wish Egypt of the consistent stances more stability. We can never forget the stance of this dear country. We do not allow anyone here in Kuwait to do anything that would shake security and stability." He went on to say: "We have charity societies which may have sent in the past some amounts of money to implement charity projects in Egypt or any other Arab or Islamic country but the aim was never for these amounts to arrive to promote or support terrorism." "We have reached a formula that 'no-one can take any amounts out [of Kuwait] except with the knowledge of the Kuwaiti authorities."

On whether political party work is possible for Kuwait Shaykh Sa'd said: "We are a small community built on love, brotherhood, understanding, and unity. The Kuwaiti people cannot allow any activities or actions that would disrupt its unity." [passage omitted]

Regarding his forthcoming visit to Egypt he said that he looks forward to this visit which he described as a visit of consultation in many issues and renewing the meeting [ties] with the Egyptian people. [passage omitted on appreciation of Egypt's stance and Kuwait's support for Egypt]

Defense Minister on Threats, Terrorism

NC2212114495 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic
15 Dec 95 p 5

[Interview with Defense Minister Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud al-Sabah by 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Sisi; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Sisi] How is Kuwait's internal and external security?

[Al-Sabah] Kuwait's internal security is very stable. Nothing is marring it. As for the border, we are constantly monitoring it. The Kuwaiti Army is on full alert. I believe we could repel any attack from the north.

[Al-Sisi] What about the defense line on Kuwait's border?

[Al-Sabah] A program to rebuild the Kuwaiti Army was drawn up immediately after the liberation. A plan to defend Kuwait from attack was drawn up through that program, based in particular on the lessons learned from the invasion. There is now a first line of defense and a second one. They both have the technological resources that would enable them to repel any sudden attack.

[Al-Sisi] Has the plan to modernize the Kuwaiti Army attained its objective or are there greater ambitions?

[Al-Sabah] We are continuing to rebuild the Kuwaiti Army but it needs more time. There are requests to join the army and these requests require a big budget. One plan has been drawn up to buy advanced weapons and one to train Armed Forces personnel in their use. We are proceeding according to the plans.

[Al-Sisi] Are there any special considerations for buying weapons from one country and not another?

[Al-Sabah] The arms market is huge and the competition is fierce. We rely on expert technicians in the Kuwaiti Army to advise us of the most technically efficient weapons to buy. There is no pressure to buy from one country and not another. The arms market is open. States do not order their companies to sell their weapons to Kuwait and not other countries. Many countries also come to Kuwait to offer their weapons for sale.

[Al-Sisi] Do you believe the current wave of terrorism sweeping Arab capitals has penetrated the Gulf following the Riyadh incident?

[Al-Sabah] Kuwait opposes terrorism, will fight it, and will work to uproot it. Many incidents occurred in Arab capitals before the Riyadh one, showing the ugliness of terrorism. What is needed now is to fight the attempts to impose views by force.

[Al-Sisi] Do you believe the weapons seized in Kuwait several days ago were connected to terrorism?

[Al-Sabah] These weapons were meant to be part of a scheme to undermine security and to destabilize and push the countries of the region into instability. These weapons were well placed and huge quantities of them were seized. The competent authorities are removing them from where they were hidden. One thing we must remember is that all Kuwaiti Army weapons and equipment depots were emptied during the occupation. I do not want to anticipate events surrounding revelations of the identity of those involved in collecting these weapons. But it is certain that this group had evil plans against Kuwait and the neighboring countries. Had these weapons not been seized, then God alone knows the grave consequences of using these weapons for their planned objectives.

[Al-Sisi] What threats are nagging Kuwait?

[Al-Sabah] The threat nagging Kuwait comes from the north. Kuwaiti troops are closely monitoring the situation along the 32d parallel. Right now things are very calm.

[Al-Sisi] What about Iran and its remarks that it is ready to go to war for 80 years for the sake of islands that belong to the United Arab Emirates [UAE]?

[Al-Sabah] Iran is a Muslim neighboring country with which we are linked by relations of neighborliness and Islam. Our relations with Iran are good. As for the UAE islands, they belong to the UAE. The UAE continues to do its best to resolve this issue. We hope this problem will be solved peacefully and amicably. We support the UAE in its demands.

[Al-Sisi] As you said, Kuwaiti-Iranian relations are good. Has Kuwait been asked to mediate the problem of the UAE islands?

[Al-Sabah] Our relations with all countries are good and governed by mutual respect and noninterference in others' internal affairs. When Kuwait is asked to mediate the problem of the three UAE islands we will do so for the sake of our sister, the UAE, and our neighbor, Iran.

[Al-Sisi] Do you believe the problem that surfaced at the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] summit, when Qatar walked out of the final session, poses a threat to the GCC march?

[Al-Sabah] Qatar is a sisterly Gulf state that has contributed to the establishment of the GCC. We hope views will coincide.

[Al-Sisi] What about the Desert Shield force?

[Al-Sabah] We are following the plan agreed upon at the meeting of the Gulf defense ministers in Bahrain and endorsed by the recent summit. The most important features of this plan are the need to consolidate this force to repulse any potential aggression against any GCC member state.

[Al-Sisi] What about the idea of establishing a unified Gulf army?

[Al-Sabah] We support any idea that helps close ranks and unify positions. There must be a strong Gulf army to help deter and repulse any potential aggression. Any harm and threat to or aggression against any Gulf state is considered an aggression against the other Gulf states. We are peaceful countries that defend peace. We want only to live in peace.

[Al-Sisi] How are Kuwait's relations with the Gulf states, Egypt, and Syria?

[Al-Sabah] Our relations with the Damascus Declaration countries are fraternal, very close, and strong. I cannot adequately describe these relations in words. Each one of these countries has a special place with and is highly appreciated by Kuwait.

[Al-Sisi] Has the plan to modernize the Kuwaiti Army attained its objective or are there greater ambitions?

[Al-Sabah] We are continuing to rebuild the Kuwaiti Army but it needs more time. There are requests to join the army and these requests require a big budget. One plan has been drawn up to buy advanced weapons and one to train Armed Forces personnel in their use. We are proceeding according to the plans.

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[Al-Sabah] Our relations with the Damascus Declaration countries are fraternal, very close, and strong. I cannot adequately describe these relations in words. Each one of these countries has a special place with and is highly appreciated by Kuwait.

[Al-Sisi] Then there are no obstacles impeding the implementation of the Damascus Declaration?

[Al-Sabah] There are no obstacles but there are differences in views. But they do not spoil the cordiality.

[Al-Sisi] What are the latest developments in the demarcation of the Kuwaiti-Saudi border?

[Al-Sabah] The committee formed by the two countries is seriously working to settle the remaining points of the border issue. Both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia desire to end this problem and there are no differences or different positions on the remaining issues.

[Al-Sisi] Calls are emanating from the Gulf to lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq. What is your comment?

[Al-Sabah] We did not impose the sanctions on Iraq. They were imposed by the Security Council. Kuwait is only one of 180 members of the Security Council [figure as published]. The issue is not in Kuwait's hands. It is in Iraq's hands, namely, its full compliance with the Security Council resolutions. The United Nations — the resolutions of which, supposedly, must be respected — will certainly lift the sanctions once these resolutions are implemented.

[Al-Sisi] Information indicates that Iraq is cannibalizing and reassembling old weapons ready for use. How do you regard this information?

[Al-Sabah] We have a list of priorities. One is to try to obtain any new information about the Iraqi Army's movements and to monitor them, whether this involves the cannibalization and reassembly of old weapons or the purchase of new ones. This has been done. It has bought new weapons, which have gone to the Iraqi Republican Guards, the air force, and the air defense force. As long as there is a constant threat, then Kuwait will continue to monitor the army's movements constantly and take the necessary measures to face these movements. We are monitoring the rebuilding of all the branches of the Iraqi Army, because, as the saying goes: Once bitten twice shy. As for the weapons confiscated in Jordan en route to Iraq, who knows if other deals preceded this one and if other weapons were smuggled. Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the UN committee charged with removing the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, is closely following this issue.

[Al-Sisi] One last word?

[Al-Sabah] I hope the Arab homeland will have security, stability, and cordiality, because the years ahead will be difficult for the region's countries without stability, security, and cordiality. We seek to live in peace. Will other countries try to cause confusion and undermine stability? I hope this will not happen.

Qatar

Exiled Former Amir Vows To Regain Power

NC2412171495 Paris AFP in English
1606 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, Dec 24 (AFP) — Qatar's former ruler vowed on Sunday [24 December] to return home and regain power, six months after he was toppled by his son in a bloodless palace coup.

In a statement issued in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Shaykh Khalifa Bin-Hamad Al Thani said he would visit other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to inform them of his decision to regain power from his son.

The statement was issued by his representative, Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Hamad Al Thani, and faxed to AFP by the UAE presidential palace, which described Shaykh Khalifa as the amir of Qatar.

"His highness (Shaykh Khalifa) is touring the GCC to affirm to the GCC leaders that what he said in his letter to them is a constant fact, which is that he has not and will not relinquish power under any circumstances and that he is returning soon to rule his dear country," the statement said.

Shaykh Khalifa, who criticised his son for walking out of a Gulf summit earlier this month in a dispute over the choice of a new GCC secretary general, was toppled on June 27.

He arrived in Abu Dhabi on Thursday [21 December] after nearly six months of exile in France after he was ousted by his son, Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifa Al Thani. He has met twice with the president of the UAE, Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan al-Nahayyan, over the past two days.

Shaykh Hamad angered the other GCC states when he boycotted the closing session of their summit in Muscat early this month to protest the appointment of Jamil al-Hujaylan of Saudi Arabia as secretary general of the 14-year-old Gulf alliance instead of the Qatari candidate.

Qatari foreign minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani tried to heal the rift during a Gulf tour this week but diplomats said his mission had produced no results as other member states still back al-Hujaylan.

Shaykh Muhammad said Qatar's walkout of the Muscat summit was intended to "cause a rift in the Gulf ranks and weaken the region's unity."

"This has prompted his highness (Shaykh Khalifa) to make his current tour to affirm to his brothers that he does not agree at all on such incidents.

"His highness, as the legitimate amir of Qatar, will seek in cooperation with his GCC brothers to restore Qatar to the Gulf group so it will become one hand as it was before. We should all strengthen cohesion to ensure security and stability in our Gulf and Arab region."

The GCC groups Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE in a loose political, economic and defence alliance that was created in May 1981.

The group has been rocked by border disputes that have sometimes snowballed into brief armed confrontations. Qatar has border problems with two GCC members — Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Doha Refuses To Respond

NC2512124395 Paris AFP in English
1151 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Doha, Dec 25 (AFP)—The Qatari authorities refused to react on Monday [25 December] to a vow by the country's deposed amir to return to regain power, six months after he was toppled by his son in a bloodless coup.

Senior government officials said the former amir, Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, was welcome to return to his country even though he issued a statement from the United Arab Emirates on Sunday criticising his son.

"The Qatari leadership is not going to react and is not very interested in this statement since it is convinced of its strength and enjoys popular and international support," said a senior official, who asked not to be named.

"Everybody in Qatar respects Shaykh Khalifah, the father, and hopes he will return normally to his country, where he will be welcome," the official added.

In his statement on Sunday from the UAE presidential palace, where he was staying in a government guest house, the deposed ruler criticised his son, Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, who ousted him on June 27.

He said he would visit other members of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to inform them of his decision to regain power from his son, who is embroiled in a dispute with the other members over a key GCC appointment.

Shaykh Khalifah, who has lived in France since he was ousted, began his tour of other GCC nations to seek their support on Monday, travelling to Bahrain.

The GCC comprises Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Minister Says Deposed Amir Welcome To Return

NC2312194595 Paris AFP in English
1837 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Muscat, Dec 23 (AFP) — The former leader of Qatar who was toppled by his son in a June coup is welcome to return to the Gulf Arab state, Qatar's Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani said Saturday [23 December].

The deposed amir, Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, arrived unexpectedly in Abu Dhabi on Thursday after a six-month exile in France, and met United Arab Emirates President Shaykh Zayid Bin- Sultan al-Nuhayyan.

"It is Shaykh Khalifah's right to visit any country he chooses, and he is welcome in his own country. We hope he will come to Qatar in the near future," the Qatari foreign minister told reporters.

He was speaking after making a brief visit himself to the UAE, where he met Shaykh Zayid but did not raise the topic of the former amir, he said.

The deposed amir's visit to the UAE came as Qatar was in dispute with the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council over the appointment of a Saudi diplomat as its secretary general.

Shaykh Hamad Oman visited the UAE and Oman on Saturday as part of a Gulf tour aimed at resolving the conflict.

Qatar's new amir Shaykh Hamad Bin Khalifah Al Thani walked out of a GCC summit meeting in Muscat earlier this month to protest the appointment of Jamil al-Hujaylan as GCC secretary general at the expense of a Qatari candidate.

Doha then said it would boycott meetings of the GCC — which groups Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE — if al-Hujaylan kept his post.

Shaykh Hamad told Oman's Sultan Qabus that Qatar maintained its stance towards the secretary general but wanted to "stay in the GCC and boost its role."

The foreign minister was to wrap up his tour in Kuwait on Sunday. He said he would not visit Saudi Arabia, while Bahrain asked him to postpone his visit.

Saudi Arabia

Ministers Call For 'Reason' in Islands Dispute

LD2512175195 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
1640 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyad, 25 December — The council of ministers expressed its concern over Eritrea's resort to using force in Hanish islands, which belonged to the Republic of Yemen, a matter which led to the killing and wounding of a number of people from the two sides.

The council called upon Eritrea to [resort] to peaceful [means] for resolving that issue.

His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdullah Bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, the crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard, said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Servant of the Two Holy Places, King Fahd Bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, did not support the use of military force for resolving disputes, and espoused resort to reason, logic and constructive dialogue in dealing with such issues in order to guarantee security and stability for all the region's countries and peoples, and not threaten the safety of navigation in the Red Sea.

At another level, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdullah Bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, the crown prince, deputy prime minister and commander of the National Guard, who, may God preserve him, presided today over the council of ministers' meeting which was held on the afternoon of today, Monday, 13 Sha'ban 1416 A.H. [25 December 1995] at al-Yamamah Palace in the city of Riyad, reaffirmed that sciences and technology at the international level played an important and fundamental role in the social and economic progress which nations could achieve. [passage omitted]

Ambassador: Kingdom Supports Land for Peace

LD2612121495 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
0733 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 26 Dec (KUNA) — Tarrad al-Harithi, ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Kuwait has affirmed in an interview published here today that "the Kingdom [of Saudi Arabia] is for peace wherever the condition of returning the entire Arab land is there."

In an interview with the newspaper AL-SIYASAH [POLITICS] al-Harithi has said that the kingdom was looking forward to the ongoing talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks with Israel. He added that "the peace process has good goals, which the Kingdom wishes. We want total stability for our region in the Middle East and abandonment of wars and aggressions that are unsuitable for our economic situation."

Al-Harithi has called upon the peace co-sponsors [U.S. and Russia] to continue the road they have started so that peace prevails in this important part of the world.

He has pointed put that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has not cut off its diplomatic relations with the Arab countries that supported Iraq "despite our loathing of the silence and ignorance that some had shown," adding that the Kingdom's relations are still in existence with all the Arab countries except Iraq.

He has said that the statements made by the Iraqi foreign minister to resume relations with the Gulf states are nothing but "political maneuvers and attempts to break the economic embargo on Iraq."

On the latest news of land and marine border demarcation between Kuwait and the Kingdom, the Saudi ambassador has said that: "Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are two sisterly countries and there are no border disputes or problems between the two countries. But there is a region in the Gulf between the two countries and technical committees between the two parties have been set up for it. Several meetings have taken place and I believe they are in their final stages [now]."

United Arab Emirates

Deposed Qatari Amir Visits During Gulf Tour

JN2512165595 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic
23 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Abu Dhabi, EMIRATES NEWS AGENCY — His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, United Arab Emirates [UAE] president, hosted a luncheon in honor of his brother His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani [the deposed Qatari amir] at Shati' al-Rahah resort yesterday. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Government Said Planning To Retire Military Leaders

NC2512130495 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1225 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, 25 Dec (MENA)—The Yemeni political leadership has decided to pension off the Yemeni defense minister, Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Malik al-Sayyani, and the chief of Staff, Brigadier General 'Abdallah 'Ulaywah. But the decision has not been announced nor have their replacements been named.

The decision follows Yemeni press criticism of unnamed Yemeni military commanders, who were accused of negligence and of being unable to make the appropriate decisions.

Eritrean troops seized the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir in the Red Sea last week in a lightning attack in which Yemeni troops were taken prisoner. The Yemeni authorities are coming under increasing pressure from Yemeni political forces to recapture the island by force, but Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih insists on the position he stated after the Eritrean attack: The dispute must be resolved peacefully through dialogue between the two countries after Yemeni prisoners are returned and Eritrean troops withdraw from the island.

Saddam's Christmas Message to Arabs, Christians

JN2412194095 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1803 GMT 24 Dec 95

["Message" by President Saddam Husayn on the occasion of Christmas, on 24 December; read by Culture and Information Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. From Saddam Husayn to the sons of our great people and our glorious Arab nation, particularly Christians, as well as to all honorable ones in the world who are concerned with this occasion. May peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you.

On this solemn occasion, the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ, may peace be upon him, we all recall the values of the Divine messages, including the message of Jesus Christ which called for good, love, justice, and peace, as well as for respecting and defending life, respecting people's dignity, and banning all forms of aggression and hatred.

Jesus Christ, may peace be upon him, struggled to uphold the noble Divine values. He did not depart from his belief in these values or from his struggle to spread them. Hence, he was crucified by the evil ones who owned a golden cow and who were dominated by the devil, or who rather imagined that he was crucified. Did the crucifying of Jesus Christ remove the values of his message? Did they imagine that the separation of Jesus Christ's soul from his body would remove and eliminate the Divine values?

Islam came to carry high the torch of the Divine values, and to renew the message of all religions which preceded it. Islam said that man is the master of this globe. Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: I will create a vicegerent on earth. [koranic verse]

God created every material thing on earth for the sake of man. Hence, it is impermissible to enslave or humiliate man in order to produce or atone for a material thing. This is because all material things were created for man, so the components of his humanity and dignity should not be encroached upon in return. So, what if man is denied his right to health and life?

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. If any one slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people. And if he saved it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. [Kornaic verses]

The aggression against God's representative on earth or his dignity is a grave crime that equals the killing of all people on earth. Defending the oppressed and preventing aggression against the innocent equal defending the whole of humanity. Are not these principles also the message of Christ and all prophets who came before him with a divine mission? Is what is happening in the world, in our Arab homeland, and against the Iraqis in particular, in line with these noble values of the divine messages and the allegations of the one who claims to believe in them, while adopting an evil position against humanity? Or, is what is going on a policy and conduct aimed to suffocate these values and realize the sovereignty of materialism, and the results of that represented in hegemony, theft, and insult to peoples everywhere by the tyrants who possess the money and weapons?

The U.S. Administration and some Western and Zionist quarters have been insisting for more than five years on exterminating the Iraqi people through the siege, because they failed to subdue them through the military, media, and political wars. Since 1990, it imposed a siege on the Iraqi people, the likes of which have never been imposed on any other people. It froze their funds abroad, prevented them from exports and imports, denied milk to their children and medicine and the right of recovery to their sick. It denied the Iraqi people access to food, culture, and construction. Furthermore, it denied them the right to worship and pray and prevented them from printing God's book, the holy Koran, and prevented the Iraqis from pilgrimage to God's house.

All this occurred only because Iraq defied U.S. taboos and exercised its legitimate right to scientific and economic progress, to enjoy its proper cultural status, and because it exercised its legitimate right to defend itself and its progress.

O good people everywhere, O believers in the divine message: The time has come to uphold justice in the face of the U.S. Administration, which has treated the Iraqis unjustly, attacked them and others, and not to remain silent since silence toward injustice means silence on the destruction of the world. It is time for you to ask the U.S. Administration and the supporters of its evil intentions to refrain from its sins, from falsifying facts, from spreading falsehoods, and from tampering with nations' resources, because refraining from fighting falsehood is a big sin.

Iraq, which is the country of the messengers and prophets and the homeland of the believers and martyrs, will not bow except to Almighty God and will not abandon its principles and values. Despite the blockade, it will continue its blessed jihad to defend the values of justice, right, good, and peace, because it has deep confidence in these values, and because its faith in the one God is unshakable. Those who have patience will hear good news.

Faith in God and in the inevitable victory of good over the forces of evil have saved Iraq from the conspiracy of the evildoers. Faith protects and heals. Jesus Christ told the blind man whom he healed: "Go, Your Faith Has Healed You." Polices which do not stem from true faith in the divine values have become a source of real concern sweeping the world and the future of the human civilization, because they prefer the values of material interests; glorify the logic of the tyrannical, oppressive forces; reinforce the spirit of hatred; spread corruption and moral decay; and contradict the law of love, which was preached by Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, and with all the values of the divine message.

These are the policies that allow the killing of children, starvation of nations, and destruction of freedom. What the Iraq of faith, civilization, and high values is suffering in confronting these policies expresses its deep-rooted divine values, its sense of responsibility for the future of human civilization, its adherence to right, its steadfast and patient defense, and its faith in the inevitable victory of the faithful forces over the forces of evil, which express the most dangerous maladies of the age.

The birth anniversary of Jesus, son of Mary, may peace be upon him, and all that is related to it, should be an opportunity for drawing the great lessons and meanings of this anniversary, foremost of which is the life and future of children and the destiny of peoples and nations in the world of today, where concern for the fate of humanity prevails.

O sons of our glorious Arab nation, O good and honorable people in the world, I wish you a merry Christmas and a new year in which you will live in pride, happiness, welfare, security, and prosperity.

O men of Iraq, the real men, O Iraq's lofty women, and young generation, I dedicate to you special greetings emanating from a love for you that is matched only by my and your belief in God and his justice. Had it not been for you, Iraq would not have preserved its dignity, glory, present, future, and living, interacting relationship with its great history and that of its glorious nation.

Had it not been for you, evil would have erased the divine values on this earth and would have even dared to commit what is beyond this. However, they were defeated, because God is greater. May peace be upon you when you work and build, may peace be upon you when you fight holy war and say there is no God but Allah. I wish you many happy returns of the occasion.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn.

[Dated] 2 Sha'ban 1416 of the Hegira, corresponding to 24 December 1995.

Saddam Husayn Chairs Cabinet Meeting

JN2412120895 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1130 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 24 Dec (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has said that reducing the government's general expenditures, rationalizing consumption, enhancing the state's revenues, and improving productive are basic tasks which cannot be dealt with individually but which must be addressed through direct, balanced, and swift control that would lead to clear and tangible results.

In statements while chairing the cabinet's 44th session, President Saddam Husayn said in these great tasks, time is a critical factor especially at this stage, because if we achieve quick results, factors for psychological supremacy will be created and this will, in turn, create factors for material supremacy.

The cabinet discussed a report by the Economic Affairs Committee. It also discussed the working program set by the committee to achieve the goals contained in the president's letter to the cabinet members on 3 December 1995, and the means to implement the program in 1996.

Following discussions, the cabinet endorsed the program.

Husayn Kamil Opposes 'Fatuous' Federation Plan

NC2212192095 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 22 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer Nidal Qabalan] In Amman, Iraqi dissident Staff General Husayn Kamil Hasan, who supervised Iraq's military industrialization for several years, has stated that he will leave Jordan if the Jordanian authorities take practical steps to adopt the idea of a federation for Iraq. We contacted Gen. Husayn Kamil by phone and asked him what steps he will take if Jordan adopts this plan.

[Begin recording] [Husayn Kamil] As far as we are concerned, we are opposed to any practical steps toward a federation. This is because those who are residing outside Iraq cannot create federalism. We know that this subject is beyond their ability. We consider this subject closed and fatuous. Perhaps there are some who pretend or claim that they approve [this idea], but this is of no significance. If we look into the history of these, we find that their history is shameful, disgraceful, and worthless. As for free Iraqis, who are many, they cannot accept or even hear this idea.

[Qabalan] In this case, where will your next station be after Jordan?

[Husayn Kamil] With my due respect for their hospitality and for our relationship with them, if I find that the Jordanian brothers are seriously trying to steer the Iraqi opposition toward this direction, I will leave Jordan. As for coordination with Syria, there is no such coordination. The Syrians do not know anything except what I will be saying now. Consequently, [I will go to] any place which is good for my country and which accepts me. I do not want to be a captive. I do not want this or that country to impose any conditions for my entry. Never, I am Iraqi, a free Iraqi. [end recording]

Opposition Said Divided Over King Husayn's Call

NC2312210595 Paris AFP in English
1957 GMT Dec 23 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Dec 23 (AFP) — The Iraqi opposition is divided over a call by Jordan's King Husayn to meet for talks on the future of Iraq, a Shiite Moslem opposition group said Saturday [23 December].

Bayan Jabr of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI) said in a statement that Jordan's proposal was "vague and confused."

King Husayn on Friday called for the Iraqi opposition to open talks "before it is too late" to avoid bloodshed in their country, and said Jordan was ready to support them.

Jordan has said previously it would be prepared to host a meeting of opposition groups in exile.

Jabr, SAIRI's representative in Syria, said the Iraqi National Congress (INC), an umbrella of opposition groups, favoured a meeting in Amman.

But Islamic, democratic and other opposition groups insist that a preparatory meeting be held first to avoid the INC dominating any forum, Jabr said.

Meanwhile a third grouping of Arab nationalist groups rejects out of hand a gathering in Jordan.

Jabr also accused Amman of supporting Washington in its policy of isolating Iraq and Iran. "We have information that Jordan has rallied to the United States in implementing its policy of isolating Iran and Iraq," he said.

A senior Iraqi official who defected to Jordan on August 8, General Husayn Kamil Hasan, lashed the opposition Friday as "weak."

Opposition Figures Said To Reject King Husayn Call

JN2312064795 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1845 GMT 22 dec 95

[From the "Iraqi News File"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of educated Iraqi figures who oppose the Baghdad regime sent a letter to King Husayn of Jordan, saying that what he referred to as the components of the Iraqi people go beyond the Sunni, Shiite, and Kurd communities.

The letter, which was written by a group of former army leaders, university professors, [word indistinct], engineers, reminded the Jordanian leadership that there are Turkmen, Christian, Mandaean, Assyrian, and other sects. It said that historical facts bear witness to the unity among these groups and that there is no need for the reconciliation called for by Jordan.

The letter pointed out that the Iraqi people's struggle has always been firm as manifested in its united stand to eliminate the origins of sedition in Iraq — namely, the clique of 'Aflaqites.

Oil Talks With Jordan Begin in Baghdad

JN2512131595 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1230 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 25 Dec (INA)—Iraqi-Jordanian oil talks began at the Oil Ministry today.

The Iraqi side to the talks was headed by Taha Mahmud Musa, under secretary of the Oil Ministry, while the Jordanian side was headed by Muhammad Ahmad Mahmud Bashir, secretary general of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

The talks are attended by a number of Iraqi and Jordanian oil experts. They dealt with ways of promoting spheres of oil cooperation between the two sisterly countries, meeting Jordan's needs for Iraqi crude oil and derivatives for 1996, and the continuation of studies on joint projects that the two sides have agreed to implement.

Ahmad Muhammad Mahmud Bashir, secretary general of the Jordanian Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, said that preliminary studies on the pipeline project from Iraq to Jordan have been completed.

The Jordanian official and his delegation arrived in Baghdad at dawn today on a visit of several days. In a statement to INA, the Jordanian official said his current visit falls within the context of the strong relations between the two sisterly countries, and aims to promote cooperation in oil fields, especially regarding the importation of crude oil and derivatives and meeting Jordan's oil needs for 1996.

Oil Minister, Jordan Offical Confer

JN2512162695 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1340 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 25 Dec (INA)—Oil Minister Lieutenant General Engineer 'Amir Muhammad Rashid today met with Ahmad Muhammad Mahmud Bashir, secretary general of the Jordanian Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

During the meeting, the oil minister stressed Iraq's desire to promote prospects of cooperation between the two fraternal countries in the oil field.

The two sides discussed means of promoting cooperation in the oil field between Iraq and Jordan, the exchange of expertise, and the possibility of executing joint oil projects.

Oil Ministry Under Secretary Taha Mahmud Musa attended the meeting.

Kuwaiti Concern Over Egyptian Rapprochement Cited

JN2112210095 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 21 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed Egyptian diplomatic sources have said the Egyptian Government told all Kuwaiti officials visiting Egypt this week that the Egyptian position on the issue of lifting the blockade and ending the Iraqi people's suffering is consistent and substantive in terms of the need to end and ease the blockade. This issue is dominating official and popular levels in Egypt.

These sources told the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent in Cairo that during his meeting yesterday with Majid al-Shahin, under secretary of the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry, Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa clearly said the Iraqi people's suffering and the blockade being imposed on them cannot be accepted at all, and cannot be subject to discussions and bargaining.

The same position was taken in the meeting held two days ago between Dr. Fathi Surur, speaker of the Egyptian People's Assembly, and Isma'il al-Shatti, head of the Financial and Economic Committee at the Kuwaiti National Assembly, who visited Cairo recently. Al-Shatti tried to raise the issue of the so-called Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees in Iraq and obtain Egyptian support for this issue. Surur firmly stressed the importance of paying attention to the Iraqi people and ending their suffering. He said that the prisoner issue can be resolved within the framework of the International Committee of the Red Cross or within a bilateral framework.

The sources added that the Kuwaiti labor minister also failed to raise the issue of compensation for Egyptians and Egyptian manpower's wages in Iraq during a meeting with his Egyptian counterpart Ahmad al-'Awami in Cairo on Monday. He also failed to have the Egyptian side raise this issue with the international organizations. The Egyptian minister's statements clearly said that the issue can be better resolved with the Iraqi side, especially since Iraq has frequently welcomed dialogue in this regard and voiced readiness to pay these wages once the circumstances improve.

Political observers in Cairo assert that the Kuwaiti regime could not hide its grave concern over the Iraqi-Egyptian rapprochement, their identical views on most substantive issues, the exchange of trade delegations, and the Egyptian officials' positive statements on the issue of lifting the blockade. This prompted the Kuwaiti regime to dispatch three delegations bearing three major issues. These issues are: Requesting Egyptian political support at the Security Council in favor of Kuwait next year, because Egypt will then be a Security Council member; highlighting the so-called prisoner issue politically and in the media through both the People's Assembly and the so-called popular diplomacy; and attempting to create differences between Egypt and Iraq by raising the issue of compensation and workers.

The statements made by the Kuwaiti labor minister did not depart from this context when he said that Kuwait will expand the size of Egyptian manpower in Kuwait, resolve the problems of Egyptian workers, and pay immediate compensation to anyone who applies for, and deserves, compensation.

For their part, the Egyptian media ignored the Kuwaiti proposals and did not address any issue in this regard. They also accorded minimal media coverage to the activities of the three Kuwaiti delegations.

Agencies Said Searching for Senior MIO Official

JN2512161995 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic 27 Dec 95 p 1

["Exclusive" report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Private sources have said that the Iraqi security agencies conducted an extensive search in Amman for Sa'di Abu-Rukaybah, a senior employee at the Military Industrialization Organization [MIO]. The sources said Sa'di, who holds the position of director general at the MIO, left Baghdad on 4 August 1995 with all his family members for vacation in Amman. Following the desertion of Husayn Kamil to Jordan, the Iraqi leadership dispatched Yasin 'Ulaywi to Amman to ask Abu-Rukaybah to return to Baghdad immediately.

The sources added that the regime's envoy, Yasin 'Ulaywi, failed in his mission and returned to Baghdad after it became evident that Sa'di had left his place of residence and gone into hiding. The Iraqi regime is still searching for him out of fear that he may join Husayn Kamil.

In another development, Iraqi opposition sources said that a mass grave containing 58 bodies was discovered in al-Razzazah area in Karbala' Governorate. They said the mass grave dates back to the popular uprising in 1991. The sources said that an artillery battalion, which took up new positions in al-Razzazah city near Karbala', discovered the mass grave when the battalion's machineries were digging new emplacements and trenches for its artillery. Witnesses say the discovery of this grave offended the members of the battalion and prompted the division's command to order the battalion to move to a new position.

Officer Defects in Helicopter to Kurdish Region

NC2312163395 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A spokesman for the opposition Iraqi National Congress has announced that an Iraqi Army major has fled in a helicopter to the region under Kurdish control in northern Iraq.

The spokesman explained that Maj. 'Imad Hammad Salman al-Dulaymi landed in a helicopter of French manufacture near Irbil.

Meanwhile a source in the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] reported that the Iraqi officer told the PUK that he fled from Saddam Husayn's regime and succeeded in escaping detection until he landed near Irbil.

The Kurdish source said that the Iraqi officer asked to be allowed to contact the UN authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan.

MKO Base Said Shelled by Iraqi Muslim Fighters

LD2412120395 Tehran IRNA in English 1140 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ankara, Dec. 24, IRNA — The "Badi'a Zadegan", a military base of the Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) in western Iraq, was shelled by Iraqi Muslim combatants on Friday.

Talking to an IRNA reporter here, one of the Muslim fighters disclosed that mortar attacks on the MKO base in the Abu Ghurayb region has resulted in extensive damage.

He announced that offensive moves launched by Iraqi muslim combatants on MKO bases and positions would continue as long as the members of the terrorist organization work as agents of Iraqi President Saddam Husaynn and proceed with the killing of Iraqi civilians.

The source stressed that they would aavenge the blood of two Iraqis who were killed on Friday by MKO members.

The Iraqi combatant Muslims have so far organized and executed about 40 guerrilla attacks on MKO bases.

The MKO, as in the past, has claimed that the Islamic Republic of Iran was responsible for the shelling of the military base of the terrorist group.

Peres: 'Will Give Up the Atom' if Peace Achieved

TA2212154195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that if there is peace in the Middle East, he will give up the atom [yevater 'al hagar'in], as he put it. Peres refused to clarify whether or not he was referring to Israel's nuclear option.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz notes that at the time, Israel declared that it would be prepared to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty two years after comprehensive peace was reached in the Middle East, including with countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Libya.

As for the peace process with Syria, the prime minister said that if it became necessary to hold a national referendum on the question of an Israeli withdrawal on the Golan Heights near the date of elections, then a referendum would not be held and the public's vote in the elections would suffice.

Shim'on Peres asserted that the French foreign minister's anticipated visit to Orient House would not undermine the status of Jerusalem; however, if the Palestinian Authority [PA] attempted to turn Orient House into a branch of the PA and the building was used in a manner deviating from its authorized framework as a community center for Jerusalem Arabs, then Israel would draw the appropriate conclusions without hesitation.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1300 GMT on 22 December reports that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that "Israel's challenge for the end of the century is not Judaea and Samaria, but developing the Negev."]

Additional Details on Statements

TA2212192595 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 22 Dec 95

[Arab affairs correspondent Ehud Ya'ari video report]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ya'ari] Speaking before the Tel Aviv Journalists Association today, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres made a surprising announcement — the repercussions of which are already being felt — regarding Israel's nuclear policy in the era of peace.

[Begin recording] [Peres] Give me peace and we will give up the atom. That's the whole story. If we achieve regional peace, I think we can make the Middle East free of any nuclear threat.

[Qol Yisra'el correspondent Razi Barqay] Are you declaring here that Israel will tear down the Dimona installation as soon as there is peace?

[Peres] First of all, we never said that the Dimona installation has anything to do with what you are attributing to it. Therefore, I have no need to tear down something I have never commented on. I said that once there is peace, we would support the idea of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons. [end recording]

[Ya'ari] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who is leaving tomorrow for Cairo, will certainly be asked about the prime minister's statements. Other parties, the United States for example, will want to know whether there is any change in the Israeli position on the nuclear issue, or whether give me peace and I will give up the atom is just a partial formula. Israel's position is that the issue of nuclear weapons should be put off for at least two years after achieving a comprehensive peace.

Approximately two weeks ago, Peres extracted a promise from Egyptian President Husni Mubarak to reduce the Egyptian pressure on the nuclear weapons issue for a year or until after a peace agreement was signed with Syria. On the basis of this argument, Israel has consistently fended off heavy Egyptian pressure to provide some sort of formula regarding the nuclear issue at this stage. The result of this has been that for the past year, the multilateral talks on arms control, established as part of the Madrid peace process, have been completely deadlocked. The declaration of principles for regional arms control has not been published since Egypt has been insisting on the clause pertaining to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The establishment of communications centers in Amman, Tunis, and Qatar, as well as other plans have been delayed.

Incidentally, the Egyptians have presented various proposals including freezing the Israeli nuclear arsenal at its previous level, while halting the production of additional material. Egypt also called for some degree of disclosure with regard to the activities being conducted at the Dimona installation. The United States has generally supported Israel's position that the time for dealing with this issue has still not come. Israel also made sure to always link the nuclear issue with guarantees for the destruction of chemical and biological weapon stockpiles in the region, which is a difficult if not impossible task. Israel always spoke about freeing all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, not just nuclear weapons. It is doubtful that Peres' statement signals any change in this policy.

Ministers, Officials React to Peres' Comments

Likud: Remarks 'Irresponsible'

TA2312193395 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 23 Dec 95

[Correspondent Dov Gilhar video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Harsh criticism has been leveled by sources both inside the government as well as in the opposition against Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' readiness to agree to the nuclear demilitarization of the region in peacetime. Likud officials said that this was yet another manifestation of the government's delusionary vision of a new Middle East. Our correspondent Dov Gilhar is here with the details:

[Begin recording] [Gilhar] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' remarks to the Tel Aviv Journalists Association about his readiness to discuss the nuclear demilitarization of the Middle East during peacetime caused the opposition to raise its eyebrows over the weekend. [passage omitted]

The Likud published a statement today sharply criticizing Peres' statements, calling them another manifestation of the government's delusionary vision of a new Middle East.

[Likud Knesset Member Eliyahu Ben-Elisar] No one solicited such a statement. The prime minister should not have initiated this statement. It is a pity that this suddenly hit us like a bombshell. This is really irresponsible.

[Gilhar] Shim'on Peres, who according to foreign reports was the founder of Israel's nuclear arsenal, has not responded to the opposition's attacks so far. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 23 December adds that "Moledet Chairman Rehav'am Ze'evi said that Peres' readiness to agree to the nuclear demilitarization of the region does not take into account the potential for nuclear development by lunatic countries like Iran, Iraq and Libya. This is part of the process of surrendering the territories, the Golan Heights, and Israel's water sources, Ze'evi said."]

Ministers Criticize Remarks

TA2412194895 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' statement that he would be prepared to give up nuclear weapons in exchange for peace has generated repercussions and aroused criticism in the cabinet. Peres and his close associates subsequently went to great lengths to clarify his intentions; however, the very linking of the nuclear issue to the peace process was apparently not coincidental. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen sought the answer to why Peres decided to come out with these statements now.

[Begin recording] [Rosen] Did Shim'on Peres put himself on the spot with his statements about the nuclear issue? Officials at the prime minister's bureau assert that these remarks contain nothing new. Other sources claim that Peres made a slip of the tongue. [passage omitted]

In what constitutes a sharp deviation from their normal behavior, several ministers have publicly criticized the prime minister on this sensitive issue.

[Health Minister Efrayim Sne] Until the Middle East has not only formal peace but real stability, we will be unable — under any conditions — to forgo the nuclear ambiguity that is the secret of our deterrence.

[Rosen] So why come out with such statements now, when we are still so far from the situation you envisaged?

[Sne] You should not be addressing your question to me.

[Rosen] Minister Amnon Rubinstein also abandoned his customary caution and said that even while pursuing peace agreements, Israel should retain the means to guarantee both the country's all-around security, as well as comprehensive peace in the region.

The prime minister today expressed fury over Rubinstein's comments. Political sources told us that the prime minister's statements also reflect an understanding he reached with Egyptian President Mubarak at their last meeting with regard to verbal flexibility on Israel's part with regard to the nuclear issue. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Official Statement Denies Change in Nuclear Stance

TA2412053495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Prime Minister's Office put out a statement last night in which it says that there is no change in the Israeli position on the issue of nuclear weapons. The statement said that Israel supports a Middle East free of nonconventional weapons if there is peace in the region.

The Prime Minister's Office was reacting to right-wing criticism of Shim'on Peres' comments on Friday that Israel would be willing, in his words, to give up the atom if there is regional peace.

Savir Comments as Delegation Leaves for U.S.

TA2512071195 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 25 Dec 95

[Report on interview with Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir by political correspondent Udi Segal "on the way to the airport" "last night" — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Before leaving for the United States last night, Uri Savir, head of the Israeli delegation to the talks with Syria, said that the price will ultimately depend on what we receive in return. Savir defined the aim of the first round of talks with Syria, slated to begin on 27 December, as an attempt to clarify whether or not Israel has a partner that shares its goal of reaching a comprehensive and warm peace throughout the Middle East.

Our political correspondent Udi Segal accompanied Mr. Savir on the way to the airport:

[Begin recording] [Segal] Good morning. As we speak, the members of the Israeli delegation are making their way by plane to the United States. On 27 December, three officials and two military officers will attend the first round of talks with Syria after a long freeze. Uri Savir, the coordinator of the peace talks who also heads the delegation, told us shortly before departing for the United States that he would be able to describe the meetings with the Syrians as successful if, upon his return, he could report that Israel has a serious partner in the process that shares its conception with regard to the peace both parties were seeking to achieve.

[Savir] If the Syrians indeed consider peace to be in their interests, a real peace that includes full relations and economic ties, that fosters interdependence and shared interests, then we will be able to return with positive tidings and start planning the comprehensive nature of the negotiations together with our American friends and our potential Syrian partners with regard to all the issues, in order to start making progress toward formulating initial drafts.

[Segal] Savir spoke about the attempt to agree on joint definitions with the Syrians and forge a common language in order to gauge whether or not there has been a real change on the Syrian side; and that the warmer atmosphere and more positive statements coming from Damascus are not merely a tactical move but a strategic change that will lead to accelerated negotiations to reach the kind of comprehensive settlement in the Middle East envisioned by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

The delegation held long consultations over the last few days. On 23 December they stayed up until the wee hours of the morning following a meeting with the prime minister. Earlier, they held a meeting with Foreign Minister Baraq prior to his departure for Cairo. They will meet the American team in the United States tomorrow, with the official talks beginning at Wye Plantation in Maryland, an hour's drive from Washington, on 27 December.

Uri Savir spoke about what was planned for the first round of talks:

[Savir] The intention is for the first time to sit down for several consecutive days in a very informal atmosphere, and to examine the situation, analyze it, and think together. After all, we are not dealing with the actual price. The price always stands in relation to what one gets in return. The basic question is whether or not Israel emerges stronger from this process.

[Segal] We are sufficiently experienced in conducting negotiations, Savir asserted prior to his departure, that we know with whom we are dealing. Savir was speaking at a lecture before the Atomic Energy Commission at a seminar in memory of the late Shalhevet Freier, the commission's former director general. In this respect, this seemingly procedural round of talks has tremendous importance. When it is over, it will be clear whether or not there is anything to talk about and whether or not there is a partner with whom to conduct a dialogue.

Savir will return to Israel on 31 December to brief the Israeli leadership, after which the talks in the United States will resume for several more days. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will then visit the Middle East and hold meetings with regional leaders. [end recording]

Beilin: Rapid Progress May Follow al-Asad Remarks

TA2312191495 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 23 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Officials in Jerusalem have already reacted with satisfaction to the statements made by Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad in Cairo today. Minister Yosi Beilin said that these were new statements, like al-Asad has never made before. In light of this, Beilin asserted, progress in the negotiations with Syria may be far more rapid than planned.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 23 December adds that "Minister Beilin found many positive elements in al-Asad's statement in Cairo and said that it almost surprised him. This was an optimistic statement, Beilin said. The minister was speaking at a Tel Aviv memorial ceremony for Yitzhaq Rabin."]

Beilin 'Taken by Surprise' by al-Asad's Remarks

TA2412074595 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Report by Udi Segal]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem listened attentively to Syrian new/old partner Hafiz al-Asad at the Cairo news conference, noting each word — especially the new ones in the lexicon about the negotiations with Israel — and expressed deep satisfaction with the spirit of the remarks. Minister Yosi Beilin, who usually talks with skepticism about the Syrian track, admitted that he was taken by surprise.

[Begin Beilin recording] I must admit that those remarks came almost as a surprise to me. Such things have not been uttered in the past. They contained optimistic remarks and a readiness to see the prime minister and the government as an element with which a dialogue can be held. I took particular note of the reference to no preconditions. It definitely referred to no procedural preconditions, but I see in it more than that — I see in it perhaps a readiness for a procedural breakthrough that will in the long run also lead to a breakthrough in substance. [end recording]

The Prime Minister's Office noted that no agreements have yet been reached in the negotiations and that the discussions so far via the Americans have dealt only with general ideas. The Prime Minister's Office said al-Asad's remarks underline those of Shim'on Peres on the issue, which contradict the reports that agreements have already been reached on speeding up the rate of withdrawal and its depth. By the way, that does not mean that nonbinding messages on those issues have not been conveyed from Israel to the Syrians through the Americans.

The Israeli delegation headed by Uri Savir leaves tonight for talks with Syria that open 27 December at Wye Plantation in Maryland near Washington.

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres stressed last night at a memorial for Yitzhaq Rabin that everything he is doing now is based on guidelines worked out with Rabin before his assassination.

[Begin Peres recording] What we are doing now in Syria — I want our friends not to have any doubts — is being done within the framework of parameters agreed on between us, and the agreement is based on inner conviction. [end recording]

The talks with the Syrians in Washington will continue for three days and Israel expects them to work out a schedule and format for the negotiations to follow. Minister Beilin said negotiations on a political echelon have so far not been agreed on, and that he expects to see which parameters will be worked out now for the near future of the negotiations, which to him is the critical period.

Beilin Not Convinced of Syrian Strategic Change

TA2512124095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Minister Yosi Beilin said today that despite the optimistic atmosphere, he is not convinced that Syria is indeed ready to make a strategic change and establish full normalization with Israel. Minister Beilin met this morning with members of the Tzomet youth movement. The participants decided to hold additional meetings in the future. Our correspondent Dani Zaqen reports:

[Begin recording] [Zaqen] It occasionally seems that Minister Yosi Beilin enjoys greater respect among his political opponents than among those who share his opinions. Beilin met this morning with members of the Tzomet youth movement at the Bayt Vegan youth hostel in Jerusalem within the framework of his efforts to foster a dialogue with the opposition and to explain the government's positions. We started off by asking to hear his opinion on the resumption of the negotiations with Syria.

[Beilin] I am optimistic about the chances, optimistic yet extremely cautious. I am still not convinced that the dye has been cast and that the Syrians are really prepared to effect a real strategic change and establish full normalization in their relations with Israel. I know that without that, we will be unable to achieve peace with them.

[Zaqen] Speaking to the youthful audience, Beilin stressed the importance of conducting political arguments within the framework of democratic rules. Replying to a question on his party's intentions to exploit the votes won by former Tzomet Knesset members, Beilin said that if he ever faced the dilemma of having to vote against his party's positions, he would return his Knesset mandate. Those who fail to do, Beilin asserted, should be barred from presenting their candidacy for the Knesset. The youths praised Beilin's honesty and credibility. Some of them even proposed alternative solutions, conforming to the Tzomet platform, for the continuation of the negotiations with the Palestinians. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Baraq Speaks to Knesset on Syrian Negotiations

TA2612112595 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 26 Dec 95 pp 1, 9

[Report by Hillel Kuttler and Liat Collins]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Israel's delegates to the talks with Syria arrived in Washington yesterday morning to prepare for tomorrow's round of discussions.

In Jerusalem, the government beat back three no-confidence motions on the issue of possible concessions on the Golan Heights. The motions, submitted by the Likud, Tzomet, and the National Religious Party, were defeated in two different votes by the same margin, 56-48. [passage omitted]

Israeli officials said the three-day closed session at Maryland's Wye River Conference Center will be an opportunity "to go over all the issues" with the Syrians, beyond the security issues, the focus on which brought no progess and ultimately led to Damascus' walking away from the talks last June.

"We want to see whether Syria is ready to make a strategic-peace and, beyond that, whether it will help create a regional settlement," an Israeli official said.

Speaking in the Knesset plenum yesterday, Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq said Israel is entering the negotiations from a position of strength. He indicated the speed and extent of withdrawal from the Golan Heights would depend on the quality of peace and security arrangements, including early warning systems.

Baraq was speaking during the debate on the no-confidence motions. [passage omitted

"Israel today and in the foreseeable future enjoys a strategically comprehensive advantageous position of internal and external strength," Baraq said "above all (because of) the perception of Israel by the Arab leadership as having nuclear capability."

Baraq returned in the afternoon from Cairo, where he had a two- hour meeting with Presidenl Husni Mubarak, who briefed him on al-Asad's recent visit to the Egyptian capital.

Baraq said normalization of relations will determine how tough a stand Israel will take on security arrangements. Baraq said early warning stations should operate in places and in a manner to be agreed upon.

Israel also will demand a stop to terrorism in southern Lebanon, require Lebanon to hold separate peace negotiations, and that Hizballah be restrained, Baraq said.

"If there is less than this, we will require more complicated security and early-warning arrangements and will also (reconsider) the possible depth of withdrawal," he said.

Baraq presented a list of possible security arrangements to be examined, including: mutual demilitarization; reduction of miliary forces and deployment; the collection of intelligence material from aerial photographs; technological early-warning stations; and telephone hot lines between the two countries. He said the security arrangement would be aimed at making surprise attacks technically impossible.

Syria's Talas Remarks Seen Reflecting 'Hostility'

TA2512150995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Political circles in Jerusalem say that the statements attributed to Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Talas in the Jordanian and Egyptian press reflect hostility, racism, and arrogance and are not in the spirit of the times. Such a style will definitely not contribute to the peace process which other Syrian leaders are spearheading, the circles said.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz points out that in interviews with Jordanian and Egyptian papers, Talas said that the Jews think that all members of the human race except them are animals. Talas added that Prime Minister Rabin was not sincere when he spoke about peace and had evil designs.

Golan Withdrawal Timeline of 16-18 Months Seen

TA2512133595 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 25 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Political sources in Jerusalem assess that Israel will withdraw from the Golan Heights over a period of 16 or 18 months, if and when a peace agreement is reached with Syria. [passage omitted]

A senior Israeli source close to the negotiations told MA'ARIV that Israel is prepared to pay a price for peace with Syria, but only if it receives full value for it in exchange. "I am in favor of an agreement with Syria," the source said, "but not at all costs. I am not for a cold peace in exchange for the Golan Heights. If the Syrians want to get the full price, they will have to give a proper value for it in exchange."

Sources close to the negotiations emphasized yesterday that in recent months the Syrians agreed to an Israeli withdrawal stretching over a period of 16 months. [passage omitted]

'Discreet' Contacts on Compensating Golan Settlers

TA2412190995 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen video report]

[FBIS Translated Text] There are new reports regarding the preparations for the evacuation of the Golan Heights. Behind the scenes, quietly and informally, government elements are trying to formulate a bill in order to regulate the amount of financial compensation that will be awarded to the Israeli residents of the Golan Heights. At the same time, entire settlements on the Golan Heights, as well as dozens of individual families, have contacted prominent attorneys in order to consolidate a strategy that will provide them with maximum compensation in the event of an evacuation. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen is here with the details of these preparations:

[Begin recording] [Rosen] While the members of the Golan Settlements Committee continue to meet with government officials, including a meeting today with Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir, in a last-minute attempt to avoid paying the price, government elements have already inquired among leading Israeli attorneys about the possibility of formulating a bill awarding financial compensation to the Golan evacuees. The contacts are still cautious and discreet. Some are being held in the framework of private initiatives by well-connected Knesset members [MK's] such as Labor MK Dalya Itzik, who is very close to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. Minister Yosi Beilin confirms that he has heard about many Golan Heights residents who want to leave — and fast. In another two weeks, the residents will hold their first meeting with Prime Minister Peres himself.

[Beilin] It is only natural that the more people feel there is a greater chance of reaching an agreement with the Syrians, the more they begin to seek a solution for themselves which may not necessarily be part of the comprehensive solution that could be achieved later.

[Rosen] On the Golan Heights, people are quietly and cautiously preparing to leave. This phenomenon is not limited to isolated individuals. Three law offices in Tel Aviv and Ramat Gan have joined together to handle the appeals of Golan Heights residents who seek to leave their homes in an organized fashion. Those handling the case include Attorney Amnon Goldenberg, who represented the evacuees from Yamit; influential Attorney Hayim Tzadoq; and Attorney Doron Kohen. Attorney Ram Kaspi, who has already been granted power of attorney, is handling the affair separately. One of these attorneys told us that there have been dozens of appeals, including numerous appeals by entire settlements. It seems that we will be hearing a lot more about this issue soon. [end recording]

[Later on in the same program, Channel 2 Television carries "an initial reaction to the report that government elements are examining the possibility of formulating a compensation bill for the Israelis who will be evacuated from the Golan Heights. Likud MK Dan Tikhon, who is a member of the Knesset Finance Committee, said that he would call on the state comptroller to investigate the matter and prepare a special report on it. It is inconceivable, Tikhon said, for the government to take such action in the absence of any law and without bringing the issue before the Knesset."]

No-Confidence Motions on Golan, Sabbath Defeated

TA2512193795

[FBIS Editorial Report] Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 25 December reports that "the motions of no confidence in the government have been defeated. Some 48 Knesset members [MK's] supported the motions presented by the Likud and Tzomet against withdrawing from the Golan, and 56 voted against them. Labor MK's Zismann and Qahalani voted with the Likud and Tzomet against the withdrawal from the Golan Heights. SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] MK's absented themselves from the hall during the vote.

"Our correspondent Eytan Almog reports that the no-confidence motions submitted by the religious parties concerning the desecration of the Sabbath by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] during its withdrawal from the cities in the territories were also defeated. Some 49 MK's supported them, while 57 voted against them."

Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 1500 GMT on 25 December reports that, addressing the Knesset session on the no-confidence motions, "Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu began his presentation with an attack on the climate in the country since the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin which, he says, instills fear in Israelis to speak out against the government's policy. But I am not afraid, Netanyahu declared.

"On the issue of the peace talks with Syria, Netanyahu said the agreement being worked on is not a peace pact. It would instead increase the chances of an attack against Israel by Syria, even as the Israeli Government counts on the United States to defend it from President Hafiz al-Asad. It is clear where the government is leading us, bringing the Syrians to the shore of the Sea of Galilee."

Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 25 December adds that Netanyahu "called on Prime

Minister Shim'on Peres to retract his remarks on the nuclear issue. He said these remarks show that as a result of Peres' policy, Israel is divesting itself of its defense positions on the Golan and in the nuclear sphere.

"Yitzhaq Levi of the National Religious Party called on the prime minister to intercede with the Palestinian Authority to put off the elections to the autonomy council to a regular weekday."

Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 25 December also carries a report on today's proceedings in the Knesset. Asked to explain his remarks on the nuclear issue, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, seen walking down the corridor, replies: "If there is a full and comprehensive peace in the Middle East that includes Iran, Iraq, and Libya, then the Israeli Government will agree — this is not a new position but an old one — to discuss a Middle East free of nonconventional weapons."

Peres: Jordan Valley Settlers Policy Unchanged

TA2612111795 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 26 Dec 95 p 12

[Report by Herb Keinon]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres met with Jordan Valley settlement leaders yesterday and assured them the government's policy towards the region has not changed.

David Elhayani, head of the Jordan Valley Settlements Committee, said Peres expressed his commitment to keeping the region under Israeli control.

"That Yitzhaq Rabin was killed does not mean that everything he did has been killed," Elhayani quoted Peres as saying.

In addition to getting an overall commitment to the region, the settlement leaders also quoted Peres as saying he would recommend a NIS [new Israeli shekels] 30 million, three-year plan to expand and improve Route 90, which runs the length of the Jordan Valley. Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or and Tourism Minister 'Uzi Bar'am also attended the meeting.

IDF Soldier Wounded in Gaza Strip Shooting

TA2412063095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldier sustained moderate injuries when terrorists opened fire at the Qarni crossing in the Gaza Strip this morning. Nisim Qeynan, our correspondent in the north, reports that the terrorists fired at the IDF soldiers, who were located inside the Palestinian autonomy near the Qarni crossing. One of the soldiers was wounded in the shooting and was flown to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba by helicopter. The IDF returned fire and has begun searching the area.

Minister Shahal on Rabin, Threats Against Peres

TA2312130595 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0800 GMT 23 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal by 'Adi Talmor; place not given; from the "In the Current Situation" program — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Talmor] Mr. Shahal, we have just heard that, despite Rabin's assassination, extreme right-wing elements continue to threaten the prime minister and cabinet ministers. Precisely who is doing the threatening, who are the threatened parties, and what are the authorities doing about it?

[Shahal] What we do, along with the security services, is first of all monitor the situation and take steps as warranted. I cannot elaborate.

I wanted to believe with all my heart that the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin was an isolated occurrence, that it was done by one man who had the support of his brother and of another person, and that was the whole affair. I cannot say it is true. There is a continued trend in the same direction: Accusations are still being leveled and people are being labeled traitors by members of fringe groups.

[Talmor] Are you referring to individuals close to Yig'al 'Amir — namely, the same group of people?

[Shahal] No, not Yig'al 'Amir's people.

[Talmor] Who are they, then?

[Shahal] These are people with apparently similar views and a similar vocabulary.

[Talmor] Are the authorities investigating and arresting them?

[Shahal] I cannot elaborate on this issue. Steps are being taken by the security establishment, because this issue causes us constant concern, and we have to probe in various directions to prevent similar events in the future.

[Talmor] Mr. Shahal, you must know that, despite the 'Amir trial and the state commission of inquiry, there is still a prevalent speculation, a theory which says that the Rabin assassination was not just a Shin Bet fiasco, but also a work accident. It has been suggested that the Shin Bet, and perhaps even Rabin, knew about the planned assassination in advance, but at the last moment, the assassin replaced the blanks with live bullets. What do you have to say about this theory?

[Shahal] I was asked to explain this issue in the Knesset on behalf of the prime minister. My reply is unequivocal: Every examination of the matter shows emphatically that it is nonsense; nothing like that happened. This is a morbid attempt to spread rumors in order to create a totally fantastic story.

[Talmor] Then how do you explain the cries [reportedly heard immediately after Rabin was shot]: Blanks, blanks!? Even Le'a Rabin told us a week ago that she could not understand why she had been told the bullets were blanks.

[Shahal] I am certain these things will be clarified. Everything is public knowledge in our country, and I am glad it is, but I see no conspiracy in the fact that these words were uttered, or in the identity of the person who uttered them. There was no conspiracy, with the exception of the one between the assassin, his brother, and the other people he had tried to involve, as well as their scheme to kill Arabs. [passage omitted]

Shin Bet Relaxes Protection Around Ministers

TA2612065795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Most of Israel's cabinet ministers no longer have full-time security guards. The General Security Service has relaxed protection because it maintains that the safety of most of the government officials is no longer in jeopardy.

Only the prime minister, foreign minister, and a few others continue to have personal bodyguards around the clock.

Peres To Continue Limited Cabinet on Security

TA2312130695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres plans to continue convening a limited cabinet on political and security affairs consisting of himself, Foreign Minister Baraq, and Finance Minister Shohat. Peres has already asked Justice Minister Liba'i to anchor the limited cabinet's activity in government regulations, despite his promise to reestablish the political-security cabinet including more than half the ministers.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the above was revealed in a paper drafted by Cabinet Secretary Shmu'el Hollander on ways to improve the quality and effectiveness of cabinet meetings. The paper suggests modifying the weekly cabinet meeting format and relegating many of the issues to ministerial committees, most notably the committee on economic affairs. The paper further states that the number of nonministerial participants in cabinet meetings will be reduced. Thus, ministers will be henceforth allowed to invite no more than two professional staffers to a debate on their ministries' affairs.

Government Said Attempting To 'Stifle' Opposition

TA2212175795 (Internet) Judean Voice in English 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to Israeli Radio, Dec. 20, 1995, Hayim Ramon Israel's Interior Minister announced that Israel will not permit seven additional Jews to enter into Israel because of their "extreme right wing" ideological views and criminal records, indictments or investigations against them in Israel. According to the Israeli news all of the seven were affiliated with the Jewish Defense League [JDL] and the late Rabbi Me'ir Kahana.

Shelly Benviniste, Behzad Cohen, George Mestanza, Hal Bluestein, Marc Bluestone, Howard Friedman and Rabbi Avraham Hecht were the current names that were mentioned.

Last month, the Israeli government prevented Victor Vancier from entry in to Israel. Judean Voice Commentary:

How far will these Bolsheviks go to frighten their political rivals and stifle legitimate opposition?

How sad to see the "Jewish state" closing the doors of Zion and the "law of return" before Jews. Jews are being prevented from returning home to Israel while Arab terrorists are being allowed back in the country and as negotiations center around the "return" of hundreds of thousands of hostile Arabs.

This whole sham is reminiscent of the selective aliyah of the leftist leaders of the Yishuv in the 1930's when hundreds of thousands of Jews perished in the Holocaust, while a group of several hundred select Jews were saved at the expense of the others.

What will be if G-d forbid Jews must again flee the Exile? Jews who fought side by side with Rabbi Kahana on behalf of Soviet Jews and against anti-Semites will be forced, G-d forbid, to die at the hands of future Jew haters? Rabbi Hecht, who was never a member of the JDL or an associate of Kahana is being persecuted because of his views regarding Yitzhaq Rabin. If a Torah scholar and leader like Hecht can be included on such a disgraceful list, then tomorrow any right wing or religious Jew can be included for wearing a yarmulke or looking too Jewish. This moral obscenity must be challenged in the courts of Israel and must be protested by all Jews everywhere. If this decree and outrage is not stopped then tomorrow other groups of Jews can implement such anti-Zionist, anti-Jewish decrees against their rivals.

How sad to see a government misuse its powers to destroy the democratic and Jewish character of the state of Israel.

REFA'EL Developing New Antiballistic Missile

TA2212174795 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 22 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Arye Arad]

[FBIS Translated Text] REFA'EL [Armament Development Authority] is developing a new missile designed to intercept surface-to-surface missiles. The new development is based on the concept of an intercepting missile being fired from a UAV [unmanned aerial vehicle] while the enemy missile is climbing immediately after launch. The Arrow missile, which is being jointly developed by the United States and Israel, and is also meant to intercept ballistic missiles, is designed to intercept the enemy missile at a later stage, after it has left the atmosphere.

The new missile will have a 100 km range. REFA'EL plans to use the technology in several components of the Python-4 air-to-air missile, which will be mounted on an UAV manufactured by Israel Aircraft Industries [IAI]. The new development may win U.S. backing.

The new missile, just like the Arrow, will be programmed to destroy the enemy missile by setting off a proximity explosion, without scoring a direct hit on the hostile missile's warhead. A similar missile, designed to score a direct hit on the enemy missile's warhead, is being developed in the United States. The planned missile has a 200 km range.

The British and American defense establishments are currently holding discussions to formulate uniform standards for procuring missiles for their respective air forces, in a bid to reduce the missile cost.

'Extremely Dangerous' Material Headed for Iraq Seized

NC2612093695 Paris AFP in English
0931 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman, Dec 26 (AFP) - Jordanian authorities have seized several kilogrammes of "extremely dangerous" material destined for Iraq and capable of being used to produce chemical weapons, customs officials said Tuesday [26 December].

Capable of Producing Chemical Arms

NC2612104895 Paris AFP in English
0950 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman, Dec 26 (AFP) - Jordanian authorities have seized several kilogrammes of "extremely dangerous" material destined for Iraq and capable of being used to produce chemical weapons, customs officials said Tuesday [26 December].

The seizure happened recently after the material was in Jordan for several months waiting to go through strict border controls and be delivered to Iraq.

Jordanian authorities last month seized a machine tool capable of fabricating different weapons, including missiles, which was also due to be transported to Iraq.

The bulk of goods destined for Iraq have to pass through Jordan because of a UN oil and trade embargo imposed when Baghdad invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Under UN resolutions, Iraq has to satisfy UN arms inspectors that it has destroyed its weapons of mass destruction to win a lifting of the oil sanctions.

Jordan also seized in late November gyroscopes which could be used as guidance systems for long range missiles, also destined for Iraq in violation of the embargo.

King Views Iraqi, Syrian Ties, Confederation

JN2312184295 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic
1625 GMT 23 Dec 95

[Interview with King Husayn by an unidentified correspondent in Amman; date not given — published in Doha AL-WATAN on 23 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 23 Dec (PETRA) — [AL-WATAN] Your Majesty the King, first, thank you for giving us the chance to speak with you despite your busy schedule. We want to start by speaking about Qatari-Jordanian relations. You were the first Arab leader to bless the new leadership in Qatar led by His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani. Can we know on what your early support was based?

[Husayn] Our relations with Qatar are old and very close. I consider that I have kinsfolk there. They are more than friends and brothers. Therefore, I took the initiative to support the youthful leadership in Qatar represented by Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah based on my knowledge of his genuine Arab characteristics and positions, and based on the hope that this change would be the start of a new prosperous stage in fraternal Qatar, especially after the Qataris themselves elected their new leader, to whom we wish all success. Let me say that one of the motives of our early support, as you describe it, for the change in Qatar was to cut the road before those who try to seize opportunities on such important occasions to fish in troubled waters. At the same time, all this was part of my faith that the past, present, and future which links us with our kinsfolk in Qatar is greater than can be portrayed.

[AL-WATAN] Your Majesty, undoubtedly, you closely followed what happened recently at the Muscat Gulf summit, and specifically what was called the crisis of appointing a secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC]. Based on your long and rich experience, how do you view what happened, and what are the solutions for this problem?

[Husayn] I do not see a solution to this problem except that which comes from our kinsfolk and brothers in the Arabian Gulf. I am confident that they are capable of overcoming this simple difference and finding the appropriate solution for this problem or any other problem in order to bolster their relations with the Arab community in general. The Arab fold cannot tolerate further differences. Therefore, I think that solving the Gulf difference on appointing a secretary general for the GCC should come from within the brothers concerned and within the framework of a fraternal and legal solution that takes into consideration the peculiarity of relations between the GCC states.

[AL-WATAN] Allow us, Your Majesty, to move to a development that observers consider to be very important in the Arab region. We mean your call on the Iraqi opposition to meet and reach agreement in Jordan. Very frankly, do you not think that this is some sort of interference in Iraq's internal affairs.

[Husayn] Thank you for giving me the chance to present this subject very clearly. Iraq is in the heart and conscience of every Arab, and its suffering is our suffering. There is a tight cordon around Iraq that deprives its people of normal living and participation in the aspired progress of the Arab nation. I believe the reason for this tragedy is the policy followed by the Iraqi leadership. We have reached a stage now when we feel that Iraq is threatened by division or even destruction, and that our brothers reached the point of suffering in which silence has become impossible, and that fraternal duty necessitates that the human being supports his brother in such a situation.

Let me here recall our long history with Iraq. We accepted what happened in 1958 and we wished Iraq every progress. We supported Iraq during the first Gulf war, and we considered Iraq the protector of the eastern flank of the Arab homeland, especially since its leadership used to call for noninterference in the affairs of brothers and for not using Arab weapons against any other Arab under any pretext. However, we were surprised and shocked by Iraq's entry into Kuwait and all that resulted from that development. At that time, our efforts concentrated on dealing with what happened within an Arab framework so that things would not go from our hands and in order to avoid a very dangerous precedent. Regrettably, what we expected took place, the Arab fabric was torn, Arab blood was shed, and Arab bones were broken.

Throughout this period, I tried to give advice before the situation became worse. However, advice will only mean something and be meaningful when it is heeded and discussed, something which did not happen. Over the past years, we have been experiencing another concern, which is the result of the first one. I mean the UN Security Council resolutions on the blockade imposed on Iraq, including the dismantling of the weapons of mass destruction and human rights in the south and north. Regrettably, we once again found that the Iraqi leadership lost its remaining credibility by admitting that it had committed violations, something which it denied in the past. All this did not augur well for Iraq. Thus, the Iraqi people's suffering has continued. In addition to the issue of mass destruction weapons, there is the human rights issue in Iraq. I want to discuss this issue for it is now listed on the agenda of the entire world. The best proof of this is what has taken place in former Yugoslavia when the world expressed support for human rights against the violators of these rights. It also happened recently in Africa when the continent was shaken and when the world expressed solidarity and issued condemnations. I want to say that human rights is an issue which concerns the entire world, and is not considered interference in internal affairs. Here, I say that our invitation to the Iraqi parties is an invitation to send a strong and clear message to the Iraqi people to forget past mistakes in order to avoid complications which aggravate the situation. We, here in Jordan, invite the Iraqis to draw their future within the framework of a national reconciliation and in the interest of all sides. When the Iraqis meet here in Jordan from all trends, we will not impose our opinion on them, but we will support them to choose their way in order to safeguard and bolster Iraq's unity.

I would like here to say something which was not noticed by many sides; namely, the recent presidential referendum in Iraq, which excluded the Kurdish area. This is what I call partitioning of Iraq, and not what we call for in terms of understanding among the people to come up with the best formula to safeguard Iraq's unity and future.

[AL-WATAN] Excuse me your majesty. You have called for a federation among the Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds. Some people interpret this as contributing, in one way or another, to the partitioning of Iraq. Would you clarify this?

[Husayn] Sirs, what I specifically said is that federation could be one of the solutions to the salvation of Iraq. When I said this, I had in mind Germany and the United States. As you see, they have great influence in the world. The federation I meant does not mean partition or fragmentation. On the contrary, it is a means to give each one his rights, and to heal the rift from which we all suffer at this stage. This is, of course, if the Iraqis deem this appropriate.

[AL-WATAN] We have noticed that you are talking about a Jordanian attempt to hold a meeting for the Iraqi parties. Does this mean that the Iraqi authority is included in this invitation?

[Husayn] This is also possible. We call for an accord among all the Iraqi parties without mentioning some names and excluding others. We talk about Mesopotamia, the country of the treasures of earth and various civilizations. Consequently, it is the country of pluralism which could turn into an example for others rather than a fragmented and a wornout entity, as some sides want.

[AL-WATAN] Your Majesty, do we understand from this Jordanian endeavor that there is a kind of mediation between the Iraqi regime and its opponents?

[Husayn] No. I do not mean this, because when there is mediation the parties must listen to advice, something we have not felt throughout our moves in this direction since 1990 until now.

[AL-WATAN] In a lecture he delivered in Paris recently, Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal [a well-known Egyptian journalist] expected monarchy to return to Iraq through a member of the Hashemite dynasty. In light of this, some analyses portray this as an ambition you seek to fulfill. We want to know the truth from your majesty as you are directly associated with this. Would you comment on this?

[Husayn] I said and I repeat that I have no personal ambitions in Iraq. I believe in God, in life, and in death. Proceeding from this, I believe that my duty goes beyond individuals to saving a people from tragedy.

[A-WATAN] On the other hand, Your Majesty, some people believe that your policies lately have deepened the Iraqi wound. Your hosting of dissident Husayn Kamil and the issue of the missile shipment, which Jordan announced had been seized at Amman Airport en route to Baghdad, are two examples. How true is this conviction?

[Husayn] This simply shows to what extent the suffering of the Iraqi people has reached.

When Husayn Kamil turned to Jordan he was not and has not become an agent to Jordan. He turned to Jordan because he was aware of the reality of Jordan's support for Iraq. We received him and provided him with our protection. In doing this, we might have addressed a message to the Iraqis that their country is above individuals and above all other considerations. Any person who is worried about the future of his tribe can find a way to solve things seriously instead of leaving them to deteriorate. With regard to the missile shipment, this was not an easy issue. The United Nations and competent agencies alerted us that intercontinental ballistic missiles, not normal missiles, were en route to Baghdad via Amman. These missiles were estimated at $25 million. Tell me what to do in such a situation. Can I overlook such a serious matter?

[AL-WATAN] Excuse me, but some say, as Iraq did, that they have nothing to do with this shipment. Is it not possible that the matter is just a private deal through which an arms dealer seeks profits?

[Husayn] Would one person pay $25 million in an arms deal that is not guaranteed. I, however, do not want to go into details.

[AL-WATAN] Well, let us go back to the meeting of the Iraqi opposition in Jordan. Will the meeting convene in January?

[Husayn] So far, there has been no definite formula for this meeting. We are now concentrating on holding a meeting for the Iraqi parties. This meeting could be in any place, not necessarily in Jordan.

[AL-WATAN] Are other Arab countries coordinating with you in this direction?

[Husayn] Not at all. Let me say that if the Arabs want to rescue Iraq, they must overcome their doubts in order to rescue it this way or some other way.

[AL-WATAN] Let us quickly go back to Iraqi dissident Husayn Kamil. Does your majesty think he is fit to replace Saddam Husayn as leader of Iraq?

[Husayn] I did not name Husayn Kamil because he has the qualities of a leader or any other qualities. Husayn Kamil is one of Iraq's youth who sought refuge in this country. He has a certain vision and as I said before, all our efforts are aimed at rescuing Iraq.

[AL-WATAN] Your Majesty. Please allow me to ask a question that still dominates many political analyses. When you attended Yitzhaq Rabin's funeral, you showed deep sorrow despite Rabin's history, which is full of massacres against the Arabs. Some considered this expression of sorrow as exaggerated. What is your comment on this?

[Husayn] Yitzhaq Rabin was a man who defended his country just as we are defending ours. Together, we reached a certain level of the desired peace. He deserves to be appreciated by all parties. Thanks to this man's partnership with us our Palestinian brothers have achieved their goal. The wheels of peace in the Middle East went swiftly thanks to his courage and positiveness, which cost him his life. Therefore, it is natural to fully appreciate the value of men and to feel sorrow when they pass away.

[AL-WATAN] Excuse me, Your Majesty. Some have noticed that your expression of sorrow went beyond maximum limits. As I noted before, this raised reactions that were severe at times. What do you think is the cause of these reactions?

[Husayn] It is a regrettable paradox that until now, I still receive letters from all over the world, from leaders and ordinary people who appreciate my humanitarian stand. In return, I am amazed that some Arabs are denouncing my stand.

[AL-WATAN] Your Majesty the King. We all know that Jerusalem has a special place in your heart. What are your thoughts about this issue now, especially after the recent developments, including the U.S. Congress' recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel?

[Husayn] What you referred to regarding the U.S. Congress' recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel requires that the U.S. Embassy be transferred to it. It is only a draft bill, which I hope will not be implemented. I believe that Jerusalem is the city of all those who believe in God. It should be above the sovereignty of any party. Despite this, I always believed in Arab sovereignty over East Jerusalem. I hope that this holy city will become the symbol of peace and coexistence among all religions, as it has always been.

[AL-WATAN] Almost in the same context, the Syrian-Israeli negotiations will be resumed in a few days. What are your expectations in this regard?

[Husayn] We have constantly worked for a just and comprehensive peace in the region, a peace that would return rights to their lawful owners. It is Jordan's strong hope that the upcoming negotiations between the Syrians and Israelis will proceed positively.

[AL-WATAN] Which brings us to a question on Jordanian-Syrian ties. How are they at present, given that they have recently suffered some setbacks?

[Husayn] We are working to remove the transient tensions plaguing our ties with Syria. We believe that these tensions are unwarrantable unless Jordan is constantly required to remain a bargaining chip in the hands of others, which is something we reject in our external ties.

[AL-WATAN] With regard to your relations with Egypt, it is circulated that there is competition between Jordan and Egypt for a special place in the new regional map. How true are these reports?

[Husayn] There is nothing of the sort between Jordan and Egypt. I wonder who supported Egypt and made immense efforts to return it to the Arab fold. We have always viewed Egypt as a big brother to all Arabs, and as a cherished part of the Arab body as a whole.

[AL-WATAN] Excuse me, your majesty: Everybody recalls the remarks you made on the speech the Egyptian foreign minister delivered at the recent Amman summit. In your remarks, you commented on what the Egyptian minister described as a rush toward Israel, which strengthened the conviction that there is a sort of competition between the two countries.

[Husayn] Competition? I believe that Egypt is Egypt, that Jordan is Jordan, and that there is nothing that warrants competition between the two. We in Jordan are not aspiring for a leading or pioneering role. It is as simple as that. We are only doing our best to promote the interests of this region as a whole. Our efforts in this regard are divorced from any ulterior motives.

[AL-WATAN] Let us return to Jordan's external relations. We would like to ask you about the Jordanian-Palestinian relations, and about the confederation that might be forged between the two countries one day.

[Husayn] God be praised, for you have asked this question. Why do people relish the talk on a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation and hate the talk about a federation in Iraq, which is the strongest form of unity? Why is confederation with Palestine viewed favorably, while a federation in Iraq is viewed as an attempt to dismember Iraq?

[AL-WATAN] Where have you reached with regard to the relationship with the Palestinians, particularly since some have said that the confederation draft is ready?

[Husayn] The Jordanian-Palestinian confederation draft is really ready. Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] told me that it was in his pocket. I answered him saying: Leave it in your pocket until the Palestinian people settle on their land and decide what they deem fit. What I mean is that it is premature to decide this issue at present. However, the confederation idea is not ruled out.

[AL-WATAN] Allow us, Your Majesty, to go back to the issue of the Jordanian-Palestinian relations. It is worth noting in this regard that you have issued Jordanian passports to a large number of Palestinians. This was interpreted as contravening the disengagement decision you made some time ago to enable the Palestinians to maintain their identity?

[Husayn] We are guided in this regard by the Jordanian Constitution and Law. Anyone who meets the constitutional and legal terms can obtain a Jordanian passport. This does not mean that he is denied his nationality and citizenship by the Jordanian state. Some mistakes were made in this regard, and we are trying to correct these mistakes, no more no less. Moreover, if we seek to be one Arab nation, then we should not deny documents which safeguard dignity and equality for people who have lived all their lives in Jordan. The Jordanians are equal in rights and duties regardless of their origins. They are part of this country until they opt for another way. We do not want to see people with full rights and others without an identity, as is the case in some countries. Therefore, we do not believe that this conflicts with the disengagement decision and with safeguarding the original identity.

[AL-WATAN] Your Majesty, Jordan's relations with Iran are deteriorating, particularly after the expulsion of an Iranian diplomat from Amman. How do you view this situation?

[Husayn] I do not believe that the Jordanian-Iranian relations are deteriorating, especially since dialogue is continuing. I have received the Iranian ambassador accompanied by the diplomat who ended his term of office in Jordan. We care for this dialogue so that each of us can know where he stands.

[AL-WATAN] Your Majesty, the U.S. secretary of defense is scheduled to visit you to discuss Jordan's military needs. How do you term this visit, and what are Jordan's military needs in times of peace?

[Husayn] Our military needs are the needs of any sovereign state which wants its military equipment to be equal to those of others in order to reply to any aggression from any side. The objective of this visit is to discuss means of modernizing our armed forces to enable them to continue to defend Jordan and to safeguard its security.

This also aims at maintaining Jordan's distinguished role on behalf of its nation in preserving peace within the framework of the international forces throughout the world. We have not been able to modernize our military equipment for many years, and now we hope to do so.

[AL-WATAN] The issue of Eng. Layth Shubaylat surfaced recently. He is currently in prison because he attacked your majesty and the history of the Hashemite dynasty in a public lecture. It is known that you pardoned him in the past. Will you also pardon him this time?

[Husayn] Shubaylat's case is judicial, not political. With regard to amnesty, we will see what the future holds.

[AL-WATAN] Your Majesty, regarding Jordan's foreign relations we have noticed that normalization with Kuwait is still difficult. What do you say about this?

[Husayn] I will not say more than I have already said in this regard. Jordan will not move more than it has in this direction. We did what we had to do and the ball now is in the court of the brothers in Kuwait. When they want normalization they will find us ready. Otherwise, we will add nothing.

[AL-WATAN] When will your relations with Saudi Arabia return to normal?

[Husayn] Our relations with Saudi Arabia are now normal. God willing, I will meet with King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, when his health condition allows this.

[AL-WATAN] Your Majesty, during the Gulf crisis, you revived an old title, al-sharif. Some people believed that this showed a desire for the return of the Hashemites to the Arabian Peninsula. What is your comment?

[Husayn] The title, al-sharif, came before the title, the king. It does not entail any significance or ambition. I was never covetous of any expansion. I want to say again that I believe in God, life, and death and each of us spends his lifetime on earth. I have faith in people and believe that the individuals should exert their efforts for the benefit of people, not to worship individuals.

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak Visits

Arrives in al-'Aqabah

JN2612100995 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0900 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak arrived in al-'Aqabah today on a brief visit to Jordan. During the visit, he will hold talks with His Majesty King Husayn on bilateral relations, developments in the peace process, and a number of regional and international issues of common interest.

Leading those welcoming his excellency at al-'Aqabah International Airport were His Majesty King Husayn, His Highness Crown Prince Hasan, Their Highnesses Princes 'Ali, Hamzah, and Hashim, sons of His Majesty King Husayn. [passage omitted]

Holds 2 Rounds of Talks With King

JN2612112295 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Official talks between the Jordanian side headed by His Majesty King Husayn and the Egyptian side headed by His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak began at the Royal Palace in al-'Aqabah at noon today.

His majesty the king and President Mubarak held a closed meeting followed by an expanded session of talks attended by His Highness Crown Prince Hasan, Jordanian officials, and members of the Egyptian delegation accompanying President Mubarak.

The talks addressed fraternal bilateral ties, developments in the peace process, and several regional and international issues of common interest.

Al-Kabariti Receives Israel's Dayan

JN2412160695 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti received Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan at his office today. The Jordanian ambassador to Israel and the Israeli ambassador in Amman attended the meeting. Jordan's Ambassador to Israel Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir spoke to our correspondent on the most important topics discussed during the meeting.

[Begin al-Mu'ashshir recording] Today's meeting between his excellency the foreign minister and Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan dealt with several topics related to the peace process, most important being the recent developments on the Syrian track. Mr. Dayan said the Israeli Government believes that the present atmosphere is very conducive for a breakthrough on this track. For his part, the foreign minister voiced support for what is being done on this track.

Several other issues of mutual concern were also discussed, most prominent being the issue of the Jordanian detainees in Israeli prisons, as well as the issue of the Jordanian passports withheld by the Israeli Ministry of Interior. These passports belong to Jerusalem residents who obtained Israeli nationality. Mr. Dayan promised to settle this matter in the near future. We hope that the first batch of Jordanian detainees will be released soon. We also hope that we will be able to return all the Jordanian passports that are in the possession of the Israeli Ministry of Interior. [end recording]

Asked about the number of Jordanian detainees in Israeli prisons, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said:

[Begin al-Mu'ashshir recording] We are now trying to determine how many of these passports there are and I expect that in the next two weeks we will be able to arrive at the total number. As for Jordanian detainees, we managed to find out that there are about 40 of them and we will work for their quick release. [end recording]

On arrival, Dayan stated that his visit aims at discussing bilateral relations, particularly with regard to the implementation of the agreements signed between the two countries. He said that a transport agreement will be signed soon and that this agreement is of great importance for promoting bilateral economic and touristic relations.

Dayan added that a number of issues that will help boost bilateral relations will also be discussed. These include facilitating crossing procedures on both sides of the King Husayn Bridge as this bridge brings Jerusalem closer to Amman and promotes tourist services and facilities, visits, and commercial matters.

The Israeli deputy foreign minister said he will also discuss with the Jordanian officials the development of the joint Jordanian- Israeli project for the establishment of the al-'Aqabah-Elat airport, setting up a joint touristic area and a joint commercial zone in al-'Aqabah so that this area would stand out and become a source of attraction for tourists and businessmen. This project resembles the joint projects set up by Belgium and Luxembourg.

Dayan Comments on Syrian Track

JN2412171195 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1510 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, 24 Dec (PETRA) — Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has received Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan. The meeting dealt with bilateral relations, regional developments, the peace process developments on the various tracks, and issues of mutual concern.

In statements to reporters following the meeting, Mr. Dayan said that there is a national consensus in Israel regarding the enhancement of peace with Jordan. He noted that most of the agreements between the two countries in the commercial, economic, and tourism fields have been signed, adding that the remaining agreements will be signed in the future.

Asked about the Jordanian prisoners in Israel, Mr. Dayan said he hopes this issue will be resolved.

On the Palestinian elections, he said that conducting the elections is an important event, because this is the first time the Palestinians hold such elections. He expressed confidence that Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian National Authority, will garner the majority of votes.

Answering a question on the progress witnessed on the Syrian- Israeli track, he said: We discussed this topic at this meeting. We are very optimistic, especially since the Syrians appreciate that the Peres' government is prepared to make every effort to reach an agreement with Syria. He pointed out that the Syrians are now more positive. He added: However, we must ascertain this when we embark on dialogue with them.

He went on to say: It is important to know the details of this peace in terms of normalization, open borders, embassies, security arrangements, and the question of water. Then, we will decide on the extent and depth of withdrawal. He underlined the positive role the United States is playing in this regard through the proposals it makes.

He said: We are ready to pay a dear price. However, we must hear what the Syrians have to offer.

Answering a question on the Syrian role in Lebanon, the Israeli deputy prime minister said: Our position in this regard is clear. Lebanon is an independent state and it should remain so. We will carry out complete withdrawal from Lebanon. However, this issue is yet to be discussed.

Mr. Dayan said that Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq will visit Jordan on 2 January within the framework of the continuous and constructive political dialogue between the two countries. [passage omitted]

King Receives Yemeni Envoy, Letter from Salih

JN2412205295 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 24 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn received 'Abdallah Ahmad Ghanim, Yemeni minister of legal affairs and House of Representatives affairs, at al-Nadwah Palace this evening. The Yemeni minister handed his majesty a letter from his brother His Excellency President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the sisterly republic of Yemen. The letter included his excellency's greetings to His Majesty King Husayn. The letter also deals with the distinguished relations between the two sisterly countries.

The guest minister briefed His Majesty King Husayn on the developments of the recent Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over al-Hanish al-Kabir island.

His Majesty King Husayn asked the Yemeni minister to convey his greetings to his brother His Excellency President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and his majesty's wishes of continued progress and prosperity for the Yemeni people.

The Yemeni envoy held a news conference in which he praised the Jordanian position on this dispute — a position that rejects the occupation of others' land by force, and calls for a peaceful settlement of disputes.

[Begin Ghanim recording] The Yemeni position during negotiations voiced commitment to a peaceful solution through direct negotiations. In the event no agreement is reached, the dispute would be referred to arbitration or the International Court of Justice. In any case, the two parties should adhere to the international charters and laws. The basic thing is that it is necessary to reach an agreement on maritime borders between the two countries.

Following the aggression, the Yemeni position is based on the need to return the Yemeni POW's, remove all traces of aggression, withdraw the invading Eritrean troops from the island, and restore the situation on the island to what it was prior to 15 December 1995, in preparation for a resumption of peace talks between the two countries. [end recording]

House Voices Concern Over Yemen-Eritrea Dispute

JN2412180995 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The House of Representatives has expressed concern over the developments of the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over al-Hanish al-Kabir island which took place over the past few days.

In a statement issued today, the House said: Out of concern for the interests, security, and future of the region and a desire to spare bloodshed, the House of Representatives calls on Yemen and Eritrea to observe the principles of friendship and neighborliness, seek a peaceful solution to the current crisis through dialogue and negotiations, discard the military option, release the Yemeni POW's held by the Eitrean side, and find the means to begin an Eritrean troop withdrawal from the island.

Al-Kabariti on Syria-Israel Talks, Saudi Ties

JN2312113895 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 23 Dec 95 pp 1, 25

[Report by Mamduh Hawamidah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said: We in Jordan support Syria; we are keen on supporting the Syrian position in the peace process, and we seek to push forward the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

The foreign minister said that Jordan hopes the next round of talks will yield serious and tangible progress that will lead to a peace treaty that would allow Syria to regain all its rights in the Golan Heights and allow Lebanon to regain its sovereignty over all its territory in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 425.

In exclusive statements to AL-RA'Y, Minister al-Kabariti expected Syria and Israel to arrive at a peace formula within the next four months.

The foreign minister also underlined Jordan's support for Yemen's right to regain al-Hanish al-Kabir island, which was occupied by Eritrean troops. This position emerged in a meeting he had on Friday with the Yemeni ambassador in Amman. The minister and the ambassador discussed the latest developments concerning the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. During the meeting, al-Kabariti said Jordan hopes the diplomatic efforts seeking to resolve this crisis peacefully would succeed.

Answering a question by AL-RA'Y on the Jordanian-Egyptian ties, the minister said these ties are excellent and that coordination and contacts between him and Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa are continuing. He said the Jordanian and Egyptian viewpoints on various issues are completely identical.

In his statements to AL-RA'Y, al-Kabariti said the Jordanian and Saudi ties will soon witness positive development for the benefit of the interests of the two fraternal people. He said Saudi Foreign Minister Sa'ud al-Faysal will arrive in Amman on an official visit in the near future, and that he will hold important talks with senior officials that will focus on strengthening and developing cooperation between the two sisterly states in the various fields. He expected Prince al-Faysal to make his visit at the end of December or early January.

The foreign minister also stated that Jordan's ties with the majority of Gulf states are excellent, while ties with certain other Gulf states are improving.

He said that Jordan welcomes the convening of an Arab summit. He added that there are contacts to cleanse the Arab atmosphere and to discuss the latest developments on both the Arab and international arenas.

IAF Official on Normalization, Domestic Issues

JN2212210595 Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 22 Dec 95 pp 20-22

[Interview with IAF Secretary General Ishaq al-Farhan by an unidentified correspondent in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] There is information about sharp differences within the Islamic Action Front [IAF] regarding the issue of participation in the government. Has a resolution satisfactory to all been reached yet?

[Al-Farhan] I prefer to use the word internal dialogue rather than "differences." Democracy in our country is still a sapling. We are living this fact and are affected by it. We are trying to foster the democratic practices out of concern for the Jordanian democratic experience. We have gone back on several public positions in order to promote this experience so that democracy might become our strategic option. Binding decisions within the party are made in a democratic manner. Firm action is taken against those who do not abide by them.

Recently, there was a debate over the issue of participating in the government. We as a party are part of the political life in the country and are part of the authority by virtue of our participation in the legislative and judicial powers. We have previously taken part in the executive authority as well. Therefore, we do not object to taking part in the government as a whole. At present, we have taken a position regarding the executive authority and decided not to participate in the government for the time being, due to the political circumstances this country is undergoing and the expected outcome of the peace process with the Israeli enemy. We will not abandon our firm principles on the Palestinian cause. However, this position does not mean that we will not participate in future governments in a year or two.

[AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] Does this mean that you will participate after the peace process is completed?

[Al-Farhan] If the peace process is completed we will not practice a policy that would isolate us from the executive authority.

[AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] Despite the normalization with Israel?

[Al-Farhan] We will have our own program to resist normalization despite the existence of a peace agreement. However, we call for setting aside the issue of normalization, because it is a different matter. We have diplomatic relations with several countries, but we do not have to have the same relations with all of them. Therefore, ending the state of war and signing a peace agreement does not entail that we carry out joint economic projects or conclude a agreements in the fields of education or tourism. We are realistic. We can oppose normalization and participate in the government at the same time.

[AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] The peace agreement has become an established fact. Does this mean that you have approved of it?

[Al-Farhan] We do not approve of the peace process or the peace agreement. If we assume power, we would cancel the agreement and call off the treaty. This would not necessarily lead to a declaration of war.

[AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] I would like to go back to the issue of dialogue within the party. Has the party been divided into two streams regarding participation in the government?

[Al-Farhan] There are no organized streams within the party. There is a hardline current that opposes participation in the government, but it has not taken root in the party.

[AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] Does this dialogue within the party reflect differences between the party and the Muslim Brotherhood Movement [MBM]?

[Al-Farhan] Not necessarily. There is a dialogue within the MBM. The dialogue within the party can be attributed to the fact that most of IAF members are also members at the MBM; as a matter of fact, over half the leadership belongs to MBM, not to mention the independents. [passage omitted]

[AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] What is the extent of coordination between you and the opposition parties?

[Al-Farhan] There is serious and promising coordination. Although we disagree on many issues, our ideological differences do not prevent me from meeting with leaders of the communist, Ba'thist, or socialist parties. We found that it is politically wise to find common ground to work together as the opposition. We share something in common; namely, resisting normalization. During our regular meetings our debates are confined to this topic. We held a popular rally to confront normalization, despite the government's opposition. The rally was held at one of the parties' headquarters, because this did not require a permit, and was attended by 300 representatives. During this rally we ratified a national charter against normalization that is binding to all 10 opposition parties.

[AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] King Husayn has criticized the opposition's stands on relations with Israel. It was understood that he is directly blaming your party for your stance. Are you expecting a change in democratic life following the king's speech?

[Al-Farhan] We consider the king as being above all differences and disputes. This is our policy, and this is the red line. Regarding the government, however, we feel absolutely free to criticize it and withhold confidence from it.

Regardless of the king's speech, we believe that the government is expediting normalization. We demand that the government not slip into an alliance with Israel and not establish joint ventures which pose a threat to the Jordanian and Arab identity and circumvent the Palestine question, the Jerusalem issue, and the refugee issue. These should be key issues, in addition to the Golan and southern Lebanon.

I believe Jordanian policy in this regard is a derelict one, because it is trying to normalize relations before resolving the Palestine question, which is the substantive issue.

[AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] In your opinion, what are the reasons for this hastiness?

[Al-Farhan] They know better than we do. In my assessment, the reason could be to preserve Jordan and its independence and borders, and to erect a barrier which prevents Israeli ambitions from turning Jordan into an alternative homeland. The government believes that it has curbed Tel Aviv's ambitions, and that Jordan has consequently defined its borders and obtained guarantees.

We, however, do not support this viewpoint, because there is no justification for it. According to the government, the Palestine question is a Palestinian concern. Actually, the Palestine question has always been a Jordanian concern.

[AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] This is a complicated issue. It is noted that this issue has once again been a Jordanian concern.

[Al-Farhan] It has always been a Jordanian concern. The setback, however, began after the 1974 Rabat summit, which considered the Palestine question as a primarily Palestinian, rather than an Arab issue. In my opinion, this is the reason for expediting normalization. [passage omitted]

[AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] There is current talk about a regional Jordanian regional role. Does Jordan have the resources to play this role?

[Al-Farhan] I believe that Jordan should first pay attention to its national issues and to the economic crisis and development. We are not a big power, and we have a small population. We cannot afford to compete with Egypt or any other Middle Eastern state, because we do not have the resources to do so.

The role we can play, however, is to prevent Israel from using us as an easy gateway to penetrate the Arab Homeland. There is a Jordanian approach to playing a regional role. However, I believe this approach is unrealistic.

[AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] The Islamic movement in the Arab World is experiencing a crucial situation. Has it arrived at an impasse?

[Al-Farhan] I believe that the Islamic movement is facing a real impasse. We, as a political party, reject violence. We are a moderate group. However, if the Islamic movement cannot pursue politics as a political party, the extremists and advocates of violence will be encouraged, and the leadership will not be able to maintain order. [passage omitted]

'Free Iraqis' Support King's Federation Proposal

JN2612105295 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic
26 Dec 95 pp 1, 17

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — AL-RA'Y — A number of free Iraqis have stressed their support for His Majesty King Husayn's stands on their people.

In a statement, they said: In our name and on behalf of our patient Iraqi people, we submit to His Majesty King Husayn our best regards and appreciation, beseeching God to keep Jordan — government and people — secure, safe, and prosperous within your unique democratic march.

We, together with thousands of anguished Iraqis, have been greatly delighted by your wise words to your press and media community. Your words are truly a guiding light for the confused and the cornerstone of a democratic course on whose basis Iraqis should come together and reach an understanding through purposeful and meaningful dialogue.

Supporting your noble and honest approach, we appreciate your spirit of selflessness and faithfulness toward your nation. Once again, we declare our support for every step you take in this direction for the good of Iraq and its future, to end the suffering of its proud people.

Regarding your majesty's federation proposal, we find this to be the most suitable solution to the challenges and problems facing Iraq and its ethnic diversity. Moreover, we believe that this idea reflects an urgent and necessary reality in this extremely complicated era in Iraq. This situation is becoming more exacerbated and complicated day after day as an inevitable result of the unfair and arbitrary practices being carried out against our oppressed people with all their sects. The federation formula has solved the political problems of many world states, among which the United States, Germany, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates stand as very good examples.

We appeal to all honorable Iraqis with all their trends to rise and save what has remained of our beloved Iraq and to assure dear people that Iraq is for all Iraqis. There is no difference between an Arab and a Kurd, a Turkoman and an Assyrian or Chaldean, or between a Muslim and a Christian. What makes the difference is the individual's integrity and loyalty and to his nation and homeland. As long as we live, we will continue to remember His Majesty King Husayn's stands, agreeing with him that "he who keeps silent about the current situation in Iraq is an accomplice to the crime." May God bless you and your effort. May you live long to serve justice and destroy evil. We pray that we will be among those who help each other in righteousness and piety.

[Signed] On behalf of the Iraqis: Shaykh 'Abd-al-Karim al- Zawba'i, Shaykh 'Abbas al-Juburi, Dr. Fawwaz al-Shammari, Dr. Iyad al-Hamadani, Salah al-Sa'dun, and Ahmad al-Janabi.

Al-Hirawi Signals 'Imminent Peace,' Praises Syria

NC2512120195 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1023 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] After attending a mass in Bkirki today, President Ilyas al-Hirawi said: It represents glory and a source of pride for Lebanon that a synod was dedicated only to Lebanon, not to a whole continent, as is the practice worldwide.

The president added: The synod produced ecclesiastical results, but, as president of the Republic, I have no right to interfere in such things. As for other results concerning national issues, anyone who participated in the synod and others may debate some of them.

Al-Hirawi expressed thanks for the synod decision that the property of monastic orders, patriarchies, and bishoprics be placed at the disposal of sect followers, and not be rendered exclusive to some people. He also expressed his appreciation of statements made at the synod about helping the poor and needy in schools and said that this is something to which we all look forward. He said he hoped that the property of monastic orders, patriarchies, and others would be placed at the service of the Lebanese people, to enable them to build homes for themselves.

Al-Hirawi signaled an imminent peace in the south and Western al-Biqa', adding: When this happens, we will say Lebanon's independence has been restored, something for which all of us have wished.

He continued: Talking about neighbors, I consider Lebanon to have no neighbors. We have the sea and the Israeli enemy. Our only neighbor now—may God's mercy be upon those who asked them to come to Lebanon—are those who came to halt the massacres [reference to the Syrians]. We are on the road to peace. We must not forget that every step on the road to peace will be met with reservations and obstacles put up by many people who wish no peace for the Middle East.

Al-Hirawi said we must all be vigilant and said he hoped God would take care of Lebanon, because the current phase is difficult but can be overcome with patience and wisdom.

Al-Hariri on Separate Talks With Israel

NC2312120695 Paris AFP in English 0947 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Dec 23 (AFP)—Lebanon said on Saturday [23 December] it would negotiate a separate peace deal with Israel but would only sign the document when an overall agreement had been reached with Syria.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri said his country's negotiations with Israel would be based on Israel's withdrawal from its self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

"The signing of peace will be simultaneous," so that neither Syria nor Lebanon will be "isolated," al-Hariri added.

The statement comes after Israeli suggestions that Syria maintain its sizeable influence over Lebanon, where it has stationed 40,000 troops.

Israel and Syria are to resume their peace negotiations, which ground to a halt six months ago, near Washington on Wednesday for three days of intense talks, followed by further discussions.

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher brokered the restart of the talks last week during a diplomatic shuttle between Israel and Syria.

The negotiations have stumbled over security arrangements on the Golan Heights, which Israel seized from Syria during the 1967 Middle East war. Syria is demanding that Israel withdraw from the Golan in exchange for peace.

Al-Hariri said he was "confident about Lebanon's future."

"Lebanon can count, not only on Syria, but also on all the other Arab states and its friendly international relations, which are based, like Syria, on its sovereignty and independence," al-Hariri said.

Al-Hariri on Army Deployment, Talks With Israel

NC2512091595 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0800 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri yesterday revealed that preparations are now under way to deploy the Lebanese Army in the south. He said negotiations between Israel and Lebanon will begin after the completion of two rounds of talks between Syria and Israel.

Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul stressed the importance of keeping the Lebanese army away from politicians' interference in the current stage. He said the army will become very important.

Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim said the work of the so-called Resistance in Lebanon is not connected with any settlement. He said: We are the claimants of an integrated plan. No one can negate our role or decide our future.

His Eminence Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir Qabalan, deputy chairman of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council, said

Lebanon is still in the intensive care unit while our officials claim that Lebanon is engaged in the process of security and peace.

Hizballah Explores Role as Negotiations Approach

NC2112172295 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1644 GMT 21 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 21 Dec (MENA)—Lebanese political circles have revealed that Hizballah leaders are conducting intensive contacts with officials in Tehran and Damascus to explore the future prospects of the Lebanese Islamic Resistance's role in light of the new peace developments in the region and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar's statements during his recent visit to Lebanon.

Al-Shar' had said that Syria opposes escalation in south Lebanon. He called for calming down the situation and a halt to Katyusha attacks on civilians. Lebanese circles interpreted this as a call to reduce or halt resistance operations during the upcoming negotiations.

The Lebanese circles said that two Hizballah delegations visited Damascus and Tehran in the last few days to discuss these developments and their likely consequences for the resistance.

According to reports it is likely that Israel will present a proposal to Syria and Lebanon to halt resistance operations and Katyusha attacks in return for a halt in Israeli artillery attacks and aerial, land, and naval reconnaissance operations and a declaration by Israel of a timetable for its withdrawal from south Lebanon.

So far the above report has not been confirmed by official Lebanese circles. Meanwhile, a prominent Shiite leader declared that the Islamic Resistance will not allow anyone to disarm it, impose on it a war it does not want, or dictate to it a position it abhors.

Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah remarked that the Islamic Resistance will use its weapons when this serves the good of the Islamic nation. He said he doubts that the Syrian-Israeli negotiations will achieve quick or decisive results and that the negotiators will face complex problems.

Hizballah Official Denies Contacts With Syria

NC2412071495 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The coming days will see confrontations with the Zionist enemy, when the atmosphere of negotiations in the region will not affect Resistance operations against the Zionists. Hizballah's deputy secretary general, His Eminence Shaykh Na'im Qasim, reiterated this when he returned from a visit to Tehran. In Iran, Shaykh Qasim met the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Sayyid Khamene'i, may God protect him, and senior Iranian officials. Shaykh Qasim quoted the leader as saying that Hizballah's jihad has greatly affected the morale of the enemies, who are trying in vain to harm the fighters' willpower by launching campaigns of lies about their gains. He added, had the enemies not been pained by the Islamic Resistance operations, we would never have faced such a vicious media onslaught.

The Hizballah deputy secretary general pointed out that the Hizballah delegation's visit to Iran has nothing to do with developments in the settlement process in the region. Shaykh Qasim did not sense any contacts between Syria and Iran concerning the settlement process. He added that there have been no contacts between Hizballah and the Syrians on the political or security levels since the arrival of the U.S. secretary.

Reportage on Military Activities in South

2 Hizballah 'Terrorists' Killed

TA2212061495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Two terrorists were killed yesterday in a clash with an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] force that was carrying out operational activity in the eastern sector of the security zone. Our forces incurred no casualties. Our correspondent Ilan Ro'e reports that when the IDF soldiers discovered the terrorist squad, they opened fire and killed two terrorists. They learned after the clash that the terrorists were Hizballah members.

Our correspondent notes that four terrorists were killed in south Lebanon a night earlier.

Fatah Claims Attack

NC2212101695 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A military spokesman in Jerusalem has announced that two Hizballah fighters were killed in a clash with the Israeli army in south Lebanon last night. According to the spokesman, the clash occurred in the eastern sector of the security strip.

The Israeli forces bombarded the townships of Haddathah, Sribbin, and Bra'shit and the valleys surrounding Majdal Zun, al-Mansuri, al-Bayyadah, Frun, and al-Ghanduriyah this morning.

In Western al-Biqa', the Israeli troops raked the hills of Jabal al-Dahr, the vicinity of ('Ayn Sujur), and al-Dallafah.

The Fatah Movement earlier today announced that one of its groups attacked the al-Dabshah and 'Ali al-Tahir positions with rockets and machine guns.

2 SLA Members Killed

NC2312091595 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0900 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Two members of the Lahd forces [South Lebanese Army, SLA] were killed at the Kafr Huna position during a resistance attack last night. This was announced by Lahd's sources.

A resistance spokesman said all the members of the attacking resistance unit returned safely to base.

SLA Member Killed

NC2412072095 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance detonated an explosive charge as a Lahdist [South Lebanese Army, SLA] agent was passing in the township of Hula at 1620 yesterday. The agent was killed instantly.

Israel Overflights, 'Resistance' Attack

NC2412120395 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli warplanes conducted mock raids over Sidon this morning.

Elsewhere, a Resistance unit attacked the [South Lebanese Army, SLA] position of Anan at 1145 today. A member of the force manning the position, Hasib Sa'd, was killed during the attack. A group of Israeli agents is searching the area.

The areas of Dayr al-Mukhallis, Arnun, and al-Qulay'ah in Iqlim al-Kharrub have been coming under intensive shell fire since 1200 today.

SLA Soldier Killed

NC2412151695 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A South Lebanese Army [SLA] soldier was killed at noon today in a terrorist attack on Anan post. The SLA soldiers manning the post, backed by SLA and Israeli artillery, inflicted some casualties among the attackers.

'Resistance' Attack, Israeli Shelling

NC2512091495 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance attacked the enemy's al-Qantarah post this morning and responded to Zionist acts of aggression against several areas.

For more details on the situation in the south here is our correspondent Samir 'Alamah.

[Begin 'Alamah recording] The Islamic Resistance resumed its jihad operations this morning with an attack on the enemy's al- Qantarah post.

Yesterday, the Islamic Resistance carried out a series of operations, defeating and inflicting many casualties on the occupation forces and their Lahdist Agents [South Lebanese Army, SLA] in the area between al-Nabatiyah and [placename indistinct]. These operations reconfirm the established equation that the Resistance will continue until the occupation ends.

Marking the anniversary of the birth of the father of the free people and prince of martyrs, Abu-'Abdallah al-Husayn, may peace be upon him, the mujahidin groups committed to his line attacked the enemy's al-Qantarah post this morning with rockets and machine guns. Sources in the Islamic Resistance confirmed that several fortifications were destroyed and many casualties occurred.

Security sources this morning reported a Resistance attack on al- Qantarah and said the Resistance men responded to the shelling of the outskirts of Qabrikha and Wadi al-Saluqi and silenced the source of fire.

Yesterday the Islamic Resistance carried out bold operations against the enemy and his Agents. Yesterday afternoon the Martyr 'Ali 'Illayq Group laid an ambush against a mechanized Zionist patrol on the Qal'at al-Shaqif road. As the patrol arrived in the area, the mujahidin rained machine-gun and rocket fire on it, killing or wounding its members.

At the same time the Martyr [name indistinct] of the fire support unit attacked occupation posts in al-Shaqif and 'Ali al-Tahir with the appropriate weapons, scoring direct hits against both posts.

The Islamic Resistance directed a new blow to the Agents. The Martyr Muhammad Kamil [name indistinct] carried out a qualitative operation at noon yesterday, attacking a Lahdist ambush in Anan near Sidon with machine guns and rockets. The personnel staging the ambush were killed or wounded. Simultaneously, the

Martyr Muhammad 'Atiyah shelled the Agents' positions in Anan and [placename indistinct], scoring direct hits. While the enemy sources kept silent about losses, the Agent militia's radio admitted a few hours later that one Agent was killed in the Anan attack. The radio acknowledged the death of another Lahdist member.

In the past two days the Islamic Resistance inflicted a just punishment on several agents. Among them were two officials in charge of Agent security: Samir Jurji, who was in charge of the Kafr Huna Crossing, and Yusuf [words indistinct].

As part of the Zionist acts of aggression, the occupation artillery emplacements in 'Alman and [placename indistinct] this morning bombarded the outskirts of Qabrikha, Wadi al-Saluqi, and Wadi Hujayr with 81, 120, and 155-mm shells. The shelling, which was accompanied by 12.7-mm [word indistinct], lasted over an hour. [passage indistinct]

The occupation forces in [placename indistinct] and Qal'at Arnun fired [words indistinct] on the outskirts of Kafr Tibnit, Yuhmur, Arnun, and Mazra'at al-Hamra'. Al-Jabal al-Rafi' came under 120-mm artillery fire originating from the al-Rayhan position. [passage indistinct] [end recording]

Hizballah Claims 2 Israeli Casualties

NC2512113495 Paris AFP in English
1110 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Dec 25 (AFP)—The Iranian-backed Hizballah movement said on Monday [25 December] its guerrillas shot dead an Israeli soldier and wounded another in the Israeli-occupied "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

A Hizballah spokesman who telephoned AFP in Beirut said a commando unit fired at an Israeli position in Sujud, "killing one enemy soldier and wounding another."

There was no immediate Israeli confirmation of the death.

Hizballah spearheads attacks on the Israeli army and its proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army, in the occupied border strip.

Al-Shar' Discusses Peace Process With Cabinet

JN2612135195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Chaired by Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, the Council of Ministers convened at 1100 this morning. The cabinet discussed political developments on the Arab and international scenes. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' gave a comprehensive and detailed presentation on the developments, particularly those related to the peace process.

The cabinet reviewed the work of the Economic Committee. It also examined issues listed on its agenda and those submitted to it and made the appropriate decisions.

Yemeni Envoy on Solving Crisis With Eritrea

JN2312201995 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 23 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yahya al-Mutawakil, assistant secretary general of the General People's Congress and the Yemeni president's envoy, arrived in Damascus this evening.

Al-Mutawakil was received on arrival at Damascus International Airport by Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, ranking Foreign Ministry officials, the Yemeni ambassador in Damascus and Embassy staff.

Al-Mutawakil made the following statement to journalists:

[Begin recording in progress] [al-Mutawakil] ... al-Asad from his brother Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih to explain the situation and developments that resulted from the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni sovereignty in al-Hanish island, and to hold consultations on this subject, which is not only a Yemeni issue, but a pan-Arab one.

[Unidentified correspondent] What are the latest developments of the international efforts aimed to solve the problem of al-Hanish al-Kabir?

[al-Mutawakil] In fact, there are many such efforts, the latest of which was the Ethiopian effort, which resulted in the release of the prisoners and which, at least, nudged the dialogue between Yemen and Eritrea. However, so far we have not had any success concerning the aggression and the elimination of its results. [end recording]

Damascus Content With Yemen-Eritrea 'Relaxation'

JN2512104095 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0940 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 25 Dec (SANA)—In response to a question by the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY correspondent on the events in the Red Sea and the ongoing Eritrean-Yemeni dispute over al-Hanish al-Kabir island, Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, has stated the following:

We are following with great interest developments in the Red Sea, which triggered Eritrean-Yemeni clashes on al-Hanish al-Kabir island.

Qaddur expressed satisfaction with the signs of relaxation in this crisis represented by efforts to release Yemeni POW's and the good offices made of several countries, including the fraternal Arab Republic of Egypt, to contain the crisis which, if continued and aggravated, could hurt the interests of the two neighboring countries, Yemen and Eritrea, not to mention the complications jeopardizing security in this sensitive part of the world and undermining inter-state good neighborly relations.

Qaddur added: Given all this, we believe that the dispute can best be resolved by returning the situation to what it was before the start of recent hostilities and engaging in bilateral negotiations to reach a solution grounded in the rules of international law and the principles of good neighborliness. Such a solution must safeguard the dignity and rights of the two neighboring states, particularly since Yemen supported and aided the Eritrean revolution by way of granting it direct aid and serving as a conduit for the aid this revolution received from other countries.

'Source' Sees Change in Israeli Peace Positions

NC2512123895 Paris AFP in English 1115 GMT 25 Dec 95

[Report by Wadih El Helou]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Damascus, Dec 25 (AFP)—Syria was cautiously optimistic on Monday [25 December] about the prospects for its peace negotiations with Israel ahead of their resumption in the United States on Wednesday after a six month freeze.

Senior officials said the talks would provide a test of Israel's seriousness about making peace but cited a change in the Jewish state's attitude since the November 4 assassination of prime minister Yitzhaq Rabin for their optimism.

"Syria has noted a change of position in the declarations of (Prime Minister Shim'on) Peres which has marked him out from his predecessor Yitzhaq Rabin," a well-placed source told AFP.

The same source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Peres had made overtures towards peace. "These overtures from Peres and his declarations contrast with the attitude of Rabin," he said.

"They could lead to a change in pace of the peace discussions with Syria and Lebanon."

His comments were echoed by Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Talas, who told the Egyptian weekly newspaper ROSE AL-YUSUF: "Rabin was not sincere in his talk about peace. He would say one thing, but be hiding something else."

The source in Damascus said the resumption of talks, agreed after a peace shuttle earlier this month by US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, would be "a test of Israeli seriousness."

"If Israel shows its seriousness and its desire to conclude a stable and lasting peace, the time frame will be reduced," he said. [passage omitted]

Press on Talks Resumption, Escalation in Lebanon

JN2312080695 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 23 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "True, Comprehensive Peace," TISHRIN says in its editorial: Syria has adopted a positive stance toward the peace process and is eager to make the Washington talks, which will begin on 27 December, achieve constructive results to advance the peace process. This Syrian stance stems from Syria's concern about pan-Arab interests, rights, and future, and its desire to defend Arab existence against all threats and challenges. This stance also stems from a general conviction that there can be no peace without Syria, in view of its strategic location, effective role, credibility, and Arab and regional policy. Syria is serious about the peace process. It wants this process to achieve its objectives. Syria adheres to peace as a strategic option to end tragedies in the Middle East.

The paper concludes: Certainly, peace requires practical stands on the ground. Achieving it is not impossible. Syria made it clear that it wants to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region. It is necessary, therefore, that the other side show goodwill. The Israelis must make the necessary response to quickly put the peace process with Syria on the right track. This will achieve a just and comprehensive peace, the peace of the brave.

AL-THAWRAH asserts that a serious breakthrough in the peace talks can never be achieved without a real change in the Israeli position. Israel must respond to the resolutions of the Security Council and the principles and requirements of the peace process, primarily full withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the Golan and the acceptance of parallel [mutawaziyah], equal [mutasawiyah], equitable [mutakafi'ah], and reciprocal [mutaqabilah] security arrangements on the 4 June 1967 lines.

AL-THAWRAH adds: All observers agree that the past stage of obstruction that caused dormancy in the peace process is the result of Israeli pretexts that were created on purpose to delay peace on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks until after Israeli elections next year.

The paper asserts that substance is more important than all the views and ideas proposed on procedural matters related to mechanisms to achieve the required goal. Everybody knows that substance is full Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the Golan and ending occupation and aggression. This is a prelude to achieving security and stability in line with a just and comprehensive peace accepted by people. This peace must restore rights and land and guarantee every party its rights.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: Syria is very clear about its stands. It is always committed to what it says and does what it commits itself to. This is because Syria says only its conviction and does only what is in line with its goals and aspirations. If progress is to be achieved, all Israel has to do is go to the talks with practical, new stands that are different from past stands and that are in harmony with the foundations and requirements of peace.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH speaks about Israeli escalation in southern Lebanon. The flare-up in southern Lebanon is something done deliberately by Israel on the pretext of stopping the operations of the Lebanese national resistance, which is exercising its national role and legitimate right. Thus, Israel increased missile attacks and artillery shelling of the villages of the steadfast south and defenseless civilians. By doing so, Israel defies the UN resolutions and international legitimacy. At the same time, Israel wants Lebanon to resign to this aggressive reality and to accept the demands for hegemony and normalization.

The paper asserts that the Israeli occupation is responsible for military escalation in the south. The occupation generated Lebanese resistance. The raids and attacks on the villages of the south generated reactions. The occupation continues to be a source of tension and instability.

The paper goes on: Naturally, Israel should not expect the Lebanese to welcome its humiliating conditions or surrender to its occupation. It should not expect peace with Lebanon while occupying its territory. Israel must abandon the policy of threats, maneuvering, and procrastinating. It should also accommodate international resolutions and the principles of the peace process, primarily withdrawal from the south and western al-Biqa'. This alone can provide security and achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: Definitely, Lebanon will not halt the resistance as long as the occupation continues. The Lebanese people are determined to regain all their geographical and political rights.

Radio on Damascus Seeking Peace, Not 'Settlement'

JN2212151195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 22 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: While waiting for the talks between Syria and Israel due to be held near Washington on 27 December and under the patronage and participation of the United States, Israeli officials are making hints about the possibility of full withdrawal from the Golan and relinquishing the conditions set by Rabin's government, such as early-warning ground stations which it used as a pretext to obstruct the peace process on the Syrian track.

However, the Israeli officials link their new position to new conditions under the pretext of security, as if peace were not the ideal guarantee of security. It is useful here to say that Syria wants a real, honorable, just, and comprehensive peace and does not seek a settlement. A settlement is usually something transitional that is subject to shocks and changes, while a just peace entrenches stability because it is based on conviction and faith, and deals with the conflict in a radical manner. Peace also returns rights to those entitled to them, ends all forms of occupation, injustice, and oppression, and creates an atmosphere of confidence that is consolidated with the passage of time.

This region is in dire need of peace and not settlements, which past and present events have proven unstable in the face of change. Peace requires a radical approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict and all its dimensions, as well as just solutions for the problems that have resulted from it.

In the case of Syria and Lebanon, the Israeli occupation of both the Golan and southern Lebanon seems to be a basic problem. The occupation of the Golan in 1967 led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Syrian citizens. In addition to the city of al-Qunaytirah, Israel demolished hundreds of villages. Likewise, the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Lebanese. Lebanese civilian facilities and establishments continue to be destroyed, even at this very moment, by the daily Israeli shelling of southern towns and villages.

Syria is facing the problem of refugees from the Golan, and Lebanon is facing the problem of refugees and the displaced. The full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon, and the return of the Syrian and Lebanese refugees to their homes, are expected to be the initial fruits of peace. Thus, Syria insists on Israel's full withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders and its rejection of any manifestation of the occupation—even if it is a symbolic one—on its land. Peace should be honorable and real, and should preserve dignity and rights so that it will be able to last and so that it will be accepted aaby present and future generations. Many Israeli officials have recently acknowledged that a full withdrawal from the Golan is a prerequisite for peace with Syria. The Israeli deputy war [harb] minister admitted that satellites can replace the ground early-warning stations.

The Israeli conditions that had been presented in the past seemed to impossible conditions that actually aimed to obstruct the peace process. If the Israeli Government, led by Shim'on Peres, is serious and seeks an honorable and real peace, it should no longer set impossible conditions. Syria does not relinquish its land, sovereignty, or dignity, and does not go against its convictions. The Security Council resolutions adopted as the basis of peace can secure the rights of all.

Although a just peace is the certain guarantor of security, and is even security itself, Syria is ready to discuss security arrangements that are satisfactory to both parties—arrangements that are even [muta'adilah] and equitable [mutaqafi'ah] on the basis of a full withdrawal in return for a full peace.

Radio Urges Israel To Adopt 'New Mentality'

JN2512193195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 25 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Syrian and Israeli delegations will meet near Washington next Wednesday to begin a new round of negotiations, the first since agreement was reached to resume them, and the 13th round in the bilateral rounds of talks that began after the Madrid conference, and was one of its results.

The expected Syrian-Israeli meeting shows that the ice in the peace process is about to be broken, and the long stalemate about to end. However, the direction this process will follow is still ambiguous, and no one can thus far predict the path it will follow despite the new language of the Israeli prime minister, which was unavailable in the past, and despite his statements which raised hopes that Israel will be committed to the shortest and soundest road to reach the real objective of the peace process. Israel tried twisted methods for four years and found that such methods distanced it from peace.

Anyhow, nothing can be predicted before the resumption of the negotiations. Based on the policy Israel will follow, one can expect the results of these negotiations. The future of the peace process and peace in the region depend on how far Israel is prepared to resume the negotiations with Syria with a new mentality and sincere determination to translate words into deeds and to follow the straightest roads to reach the aspired peace which ensures security for all, and which preserves the dignity and interests of all parties.

We do not believe that Israel remains unconvinced of two undisputed facts. First, that it is impossible to realize real peace that can survive without Syria; and second, that it is impossible for Syria to relinquish an inch of its land or any of its rights. Undoubtedly, any peace that ignores these facts and tries to circumvent them will certainly fail and collapse. Furthermore, any peace that does not consider the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 necessary and ignores the essence of the U.S. initiative that calls for land for peace will only be a distorted and crippled peace that has no legs to stand on and is incapable of remaining steadfast.

The Syrian position has been, and continues to be very clear and far from ambiguity. This clear position, which is far away from maneuvers, has received international respect, appreciation, and confidence, because it is based on serious aspirations and sincere desire to realize real peace based on justice. This peace cannot be so without the liberation of the land and restoration of rights.

Undoubtedly, the sincerest expression of Syria's position was the remark made by President Hafiz al-Asad in the news conference he held with President Mubarak in Cairo when he emphasized that Syria has not changed its tone and that it is committed to a just and comprehensive solution. Al-Asad also said that should peace be realized, then its basic pillar would be the land. Anyone saying that he wants to keep the land, will automatically mean that he does not want peace.

Iraqi Delegation Receives 'Warm' Welcome

*JN2512121195 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic
25 Dec 95 p 1*

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD has learned that a delegation of top officials from the Iraqi Interior Ministry recently visited Damascus to discuss border issues between Syria and Iraq.

Political observers in Damascus have noted that although the Iraqi delegation's mission was relatively minor, the warm Syrian welcome and attention accorded the delegates far exceeded their status. Observers consider this a sign of a slow but steady improvement in the relationship between Baghdad and Damascus.

An informed source told AL-MAJD that Damascus has received with satisfaction Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf's statements on the sidelines of the Islamic foreign ministers' conference in Conakry. For the first time in years, the Iraqi foreign minister praised President Hafiz al-Asad and the principled Syrian stands on Iraq.

The source expected the next few weeks to witness a noticeable and public relaxation in Iraq's relations with both Syria and Egypt.

In Cairo, a correspondent of the Egyptian Nasirite paper AL- 'ARABI learned that during their meeting on 23 December the Syrian and Egyptian presidents discussed the Iraqi issue, ways of clearing the Arab atmosphere, as well as a political settlement on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

Barzan al-Tikriti, President Saddam Husayn's half-brother, made unusual statements on 23 December on the availability of an "atmosphere of change" in Syrian-Iraqi relations.

In statements to the London-based AL-HAYAH, al-Tikriti said Syria and Iraq complement each other, and Iraq is ready to improve its relations with Syria if it so desires.

In Paris, an unconfirmed rumor spread among Arab journalists last week. The rumor says Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz met while both were in Paris recently.

Meanwhile, sources from the Iraqi opposition in Damascus have voiced reservations about the idea of holding an Iraqi opposition meeting in Amman, and reject in principle any political proposals referring to a federation in Iraq.

Afghanistan

Foreign Ministry Condemns Peshawar Explosion

LD2212181495 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan [ISA] said:

According to mass media report, on Thursday, 21 December 1995, a dreadful explosion occurred in Sadr area of Peshawar city, causing the death and injury of dozens of our Muslim brethren.

Soon after the explosion, a number of Pakistan Government officials spoke about the perpetrators of the explosion and accused the ISA of causing the explosion. They hope to divert the public opinion from the internal problems of Pakistan and the crisis to which the government of Pakistan is facing. They have accused Afghanistan of having a hand in the tragic mishap of Peshawar's explosion.

The ISA's Ministry of Foreign Affairs regards Peshawar's explosion as a cowardly action and condemns it. Profound sorrow is expressed by the people and ISA to the fraternal and Muslim people of Pakistan, and we ask Almighty God to bestow forgiveness to those died in this mishap and bestow patience to the bereaved families. [words indistinct]

Our nation would never embark on terrorist actions and did not embark on such action even during the harsh struggle of Mojahedin against the former Soviet Union, [words indistinct] We do not wish any harm to be inflicted on our brothers in Pakistan, how can we [?desire such an awful tragedy to happen to our brethren in Pakistan] [words indistinct].

Council Condoles Pakistan

LD2412174995 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The presidential press office reported to Bakhtar that the High State Council held a session today under the chairmanship of Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. During the meeting the current situation of the country and the problems of Kabul residents were discussed. The High State Council also expressed commiseration and grief for the heartrending explosion incident at Sadr Bazaar in Peshawar where a number of our Pakistani brothers were martyred or injured. [words indistinct] The High State Council expressed dismay at the Pakistan government's persecution of the Afghan refugees after the incident.

Islamic Front Leader Meets With Government Official

LD2412164295 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A Kabul administration delegation headed by [Abdorasol] Sayaf met Sayd Ahmad Gaylani [leader of National Islamic Front] in the Shamshad area [on the Afghan-Pakistan border] in Nangarhar yesterday. According to a report from Nangarhar the delegation also met Mawlawi Yunus Khales [leader of a Hezb-e Eslami faction] and members of the Jehadi Council of Nangrahar Province yesterday.

The report says that Sayd Ahmad Gaylani said in an interview: Sayaf asked me to cooperate with them [Rabbani and Sayaf] on the transfer of power. I replied I did not believe that Rabbani and his colleagues were ready to transfer power.

Gaylani said: Although the mandate of Islamabad and Jalalabad accords has passed, a settlement should be reached and Rabbani should transfer power to an interim administration. He [Rabbani] should know that he cannot cling to power by force.

Answering a question about his position if Rabbani refuses to accept this idea and insist on staying on in power, he said: All political and Jehadi parties should come together and under a single leadership force Rabbani to step down.

Taleban Accuses Iran of Intervening in Country

LD2312155995 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Taleban movement has accused the Iranian Government of interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

In an interview with the BBC, Taleban spokesman Wakil Ahmad said: Iran supported yesterday's attack on Nimruz Province by the men attached to the Kabul administration. He further said: The Taleban movement after [words indistinct] has managed to force the Supervisory Council [Shura-e Nezar] men out of their territory and push them back to the area from where they started the fighting.

Taleban Group Said Forcing People To Front Lines

LD2312192995 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] According to a report, the Taleban has restarted collecting weapons from the local people in Saydabad District, Vardak Province. An eyewitness who has recently arrived from Vardak Province told a Radio Message of Freedom correspondent that the Taleban group has once again embarked on collecting weapons.

He said they recruited one person from every three households to be sent to the front lines and that his expenses should be paid by the three households. The eyewitness, who refused to reveal his identity, said the Taleban had already collected weapons in the area and yet they recently embarked on collecting weapons again. He said they persecute the local people for allegedly having weapons.

He said that the Taleban also sent local mosques' prayers leaders to the front line by force.

Government, Taleban Forces Clash in Kabul Area

Five Killed in Rocket Fire

LD2212182795 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night and today Benazir Bhutto's Taleban fired a barrage of rockets on Kabul city, killing five and wounding another 22 persons.

The Bakhtar Information Agency reported that last evening the Taleban group fired 11 rockets on the residential areas, as a result of which five Kabul's citizens were martyred and 18 people were wounded. One house was destroyed and a [?shop] sustained damage.

As a result of the rockets [?fired today] on the residential areas of the city, four citizens were injured. The rockets also damaged [?a number of houses]. These rockets fired from the southern direction.

Government Plane Said Downed

BK2312095795 Hong Kong AFP in English 0809 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMBAD, Dec 23 (AFP) — Taleban gunners shot down a government jet while it was bombing their positions south of the Afghan capital, a Taleban spokesman here said Saturday.

The plane crashed near Maidan Shahr, some 25 kilometers (15 miles) from Kabul on Thursday, Mullah Malang said, adding that he had no information about the fate of the pilot.

The Taleban claim could not be independently confirmed.

The government of President Borhanodin Rabbani has accused the Taleban, who are beseiging Kabul with the aim of toppling Rabbani, of targetting civilians in frequent rocket attacks on the capital.

Manlag denied this and said the Talebans had been hitting only military targets.

He said military activity around Kabul was currently at a low level because of the bitter cold and snow.

Government Bombs Positions

LD2312112795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The capital city of Afghanistan was hit by six surface-to-surface missiles at midday today. According to a report of the Central News Unit from Kabul, the missiles hit central districts of Kabul, killing or injuring a number of people. For the past few days, Taleban has been continually firing missiles on Kabul.

An AFP report also indicates that the Taleban forces have confirmed that a government plane bombed their positions south of Kabul today.

1 Dead, 11 Wounded

LD2312171195 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night and this morning Benazir Bhutto's Taleban fired rockets on Kabul city, killing one and wounding another 11 people.

BAKHTAR reported that last night around 1900, 11 rockets landed on the residential regions of the city. As a result of these rockets, one person was martyred and nine others were wounded.

Another six missiles were fired today on the residential areas of the city, wounding another two persons. Seven residential houses sustained heavy damages. The Taleban group fired these rockets from the southern direction.

Artillery Exchanges Intensify

LD2312175695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The exchange of heavy [weapons] fire between the Taleban group and Afghan government forces has intensified in areas to the south and southwest of Kabul. A spokesman from the Afghan Defense Ministry said today: The warring sides stepped up their shelling of one another's positions starting this morning in the Chahar Asiab region, Rish Khvor, Kheyrabad, Lowgar, Vazirabad, Kart-e Sur, and

Qala-ye Fatollah. The spokesman said that 15 people were killed or injured as a result of the shelling. He added: The Taleban group, too, suffered heavy losses and damage. He said that the Taleban group take revenge for their defeats and losses in the battlefield by attacking residential and diplomatic areas of the city of Kabul, killing defenseless people and destroying their houses.

According to this spokesman, hundreds of civilians have been killed in Kabul during the past week and dozens of houses have been wrecked.

Also, according to the latest reports, Afghan government sources have announced: One MiG-21 fighter plane, belonging to the government's forces, has crashed in the Quruq region, situated west of Kabul.

10 Wounded in Night Attack

BK2412093895 Hong Kong AFP in English 0811 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec 24 (AFP) — Ten civilians were wounded, three of them seriously, in nightime rocket barrages on two residential areas of Kabul, witnesses and hospital staff said Sunday.

A young mother and her five children living in a central area of the capital were among the injured, leaving the woman and two children in a critical condition, doctors said. Four other people were injured in a southern suburb during the night.

A salvo of four Soviet-made BM 21 rockets, which hit two family homes in the city-centre Saturday evening, were fired by the Taleban militia who are besieging the Afghan capital, army sources said.

The family injured in the attack on central Kabul was living in a dank basement of a half-built house in the plush suburb of Wazir Akbar Khan, where foreign diplomats, aid agency workers and journalists based here live.

Two rockets punched their way into the concrete structure, landing in the room where the mother and her young family were settling down for a night's sleep, relatives said.

A six-year old boy was left paraplegic by the blast in which his spinal cord was shattered by a jagged piece of shrapnel, while his sister, who is seven, had to have her shattered leg amputated, doctors said.

The youngsters' mother's foot was severed by a shard of shrapnel, forcing surgeons at the local hospital to amputate her leg as well, while the three other children also sustained serious injuries.

"The woman was recently widowed when her husband was killed in another rocket attack on Kabul which also completely destroyed their house," the youngsters' uncle Mohammed Gul told AFP.

"They had nothing left except each other, so I rented the basement for them to live in, but now their lives have been torn apart even more," he said, choking back tears.

"It's a miracle they survived, but it would have been better if they had died, at least then they would not have to deal with the terrible disabilities while waiting for the next rocket to finish them off," he said.

"The killing and maiming looks as if it will go on forever in Afghanistan, there is no hope for the poor civilians," he added.

The mother's disembodied foot could early Sunday be seen lying in a pool of blood in the corner of her scarred bedroom, which was littered with charred bedding and blood-soaked pillows scattered around the remains of a rocket still protruding from the floor.

"Doctors and nurses cried when they saw those poor children," said Doctor Ibrahim (eds: one name), a registrar at the Wazir Akbar Khan hospital.

"Their lives have been ruined before they even got started. Why is it always the poorest and most unfortunate people who have to suffer more?

"We did what we could for all of them, saving their lives with extra blood and operations, but when they leave here they will be on their own again in one of the world's deadliest cities with nowhere to hide," he added.

Another family home in the area was severely damaged when two rockets from the salvo landed in its garden, but there were no casualties, witnesses said.

No independent confirmation of who carried out the attack was immediately available here. The Taleban have claimed responsibility for several rocket barrages and bombing raids, saying they were aimed at military targets.

Kabul has been subjected to almost daily rocket and artillery attacks since mid-October when the Islamic militia regrouped on the outskirts of war-torn Kabul threatening to seize the city.

They have vowed to topple the three-year-old administration of President Borhanoddin Rabbani and to impose Islamic law across the country.

Rockets Kill 5, Wound 10

LD2412135195 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Residential units in northern Kabul have been hit with 20 Katyusha rockets and heavy weapons fire. Due to the attacks, which occurred throughout last night, five people were killed and 10 were injured. Some houses were also damaged in the incidents. The sources of the Afghan Defense Ministry blamed the Taleban for last night's onslaught, saying the attacks were launched by Taleban positions in southern Kabul.

During the past few days, various parts of the city of Kabul, including the residential areas, have come under the air and ground assaults of the Taleban troops.

Rockets Hit Diplomatic Quarters

LD2412145295 Tehran IRNA in English
1427 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 24, IRNA — The artillery and rocket attacks on Kabul during Saturday night claimed more lives, killing or wounding 13 civilians.

Amrullah, a spokesman for the Afghan Defence Ministry, said on Sunday that at least 20 rockets and Katyusha rounds hit central and eastern Kabul in which five people were killed and eight others wounded.

The spokesman said a residential unit at the diplomatic quarters as well as houses at Vazir Akbar Khan and Bibi Mehr Districts near Kabul international airport were also destroyed in the rocket attacks.

Following air raids of the state forces on the Taleban strongholds in southern and southwestern Kabul during the last week, the Taleban have escalated artillery fire on the capital city which resulted in the death or injury of hundreds of civilians.

Meanwhile, Abdulmanan, a spokesman for the Taleban said the group have given warning to the people in Kabul on the possible rocket attacks on the city in future.

He said the people could go to the areas under control of the Taleban to save their lives.

Planes Cause 50 Taleban Casualties

LD2412152995 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto
to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] According to news sources' reports, the Kabul administration authorities have said that as a result of its jet planes bombing sorties against the Taleban bases around Kabul at least 20 Taleban were killed and more than 30 others injured. Five Taleban tanks were also destroyed.

The Kabul administration has accused the Taleban of bombarding civilian's residences in Kabul City where five civilians were killed and 25 others injured.

Taleban Retaliates

LD2512104795 Tehran IRNA in English
1032 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 25, IRNA — The Taleban militiamen overnight bombed residential areas in the Afghan capital, Kabul, by Katyusha rockets killing seven and wounding eleven others.

According to government sources, all the 12 rockets landed at Vazir-Akbar Khan and Bibi Mahro residential quarters, destroying a number of houses.

The diplomatic residential quarter of Vazir-Akbar Khan has been the target of more than 20 rockets in the past 48 hours as a result of which at least 30 civilians have been killed or wounded and a number of houses levelled.

The Afghan Defense Ministry sources said in a statement Monday that the army fighters on Sunday repeatedly pounded Taleban positions in Chahr Asiab, Rishkhor, Kheirabad and Meidan Shahr regions, southern and southwestern Kabul, killing 46 of them and destroying some of their weapons.

The Taleban forces, in retaliation on Sunday, fired 10 rockets and missiles on Kabul, killing scores of civilians and destroying several houses.

According to another report from the Helmand Province southwestern Afghanistan, clashes between the Taleban and the local people is intensifying.

People in the Taleban-controlled provinces such as Herat, Neemroze, Ghazni, Paktia, Wardag and Loghar, have started protesting against the group's compulsory recruitment and its attitude towards the residents.

According to the report, several cases of guerrilla war between the residents of the provinces and the Taleban have been reported.

Reports on mass uprising in the Taleban-controlled areas have been confirmed by independent sources.

Missile Assault Launched

LD2612120295 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kabul is still a target of attacks by the Taleban group. Our correspondent reports from Kabul on the latest critical situation in Afghanistan.

[Unidentified correspondent] An hour ago, the northern and central parts of Kabul were once again hit by Katyosha missiles. There is no report on number of casualties or damage yet.

A spokesman at the Afghan Defense Ministry attributed these attacks to the Taleban and added that during the missiles attacks carried out last night and yesterday no one was killed but more than five people were injured.

During the past week, Kabul was hit by at least 200 Katyosha missiles and heavy weapon shells which left at least 56 dead and 118 injured. Eight children and 17 women were among those killed.

Bangladesh

Authorities Search for Stolen Military Arms

BK2512114095 Hong Kong AFP in English
0957 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, Dec 25 (AFP) — Police and army intelligence Monday continued to search for military weapons stolen from a cantonment near the Bangladeshi capital as the government stepped up its crackdown on illegal arsenals, reports said.

The weapons and ammunitions were stolen two weeks ago from Rajendrapur Cantonment barracks. Its commandant, Major Sayedul Huq, had filed a case with police, the Banglabazar Patrika daily said.

Huq did not specify the type or quantity of weapons.

The incident came as the government rooted out and seized a "huge amount of illegal weapons," in a bid for smooth and violence-free parliamentary elections on February 7.

The police, backed by paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles and Auxillary Ansar forces, started the crackdown five days ago and said it is to continue until the voting is over.

The army will join the operation in the new year, defence sources said Monday.

The election commission said troops would be posted at villages and districts across Bangladesh in the run up to the elections to elect a new 330-member parliament.

By Sunday 327 guns, 838 home-made bombs and a large amount of ammunition were seized and 2,883 suspected "terrorists and criminals" were arrested, the commission said.

Wajed Agrees To Talk to Zia in Live Broadcast

BK2412094195 Hong Kong AFP in English
0538 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, Dec 24 (AFP) — Bangladesh's main opposition leader has agreed to hold a televised meeting with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to end the country's crippling political crisis, political sources said Sunday.

Wajed had previously said she would only hold talks as "equals" once Zia had resigned.

"I am ready to hold talks with the prime minister to work out ways for forming a neutral caretaker government in the interest of the nation as well as to ensure freedom of voting for the people," Sheikh Hasina Wajed was quoted as saying by a spokesman of her Awami League party.

The meeting must be broadcast live on state-run television and radio, Wajed said.

Zia, acting as interim prime minister after parliament was dissolved last month, has attacked opposition demands for her resignation as unconstitutional but repeatedly urged her main political rival to negotiate.

A senior leader of Zia's ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) welcomed Wajed's proposal saying: "It is definitely a good sign."

"Good sense is going to prevail over emotion ... coverage of political events by the state media is absolutely under the control of the Election Commission now," said BNP assistant secretary- general and Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia.

The 20-month opposition campaign has led to 26 general strikes this year, hurting the economy and threatening this volatile South Asian country's fragile democracy.

The opposition has called for a 48-hour nationwide general strike from January 3 and a road, railway and water blockade on December 30 as part of its campaign.

THE INDEPENDENT newspaper said it appeared that Wajed had "sprung a surprise" and a new strategy.

"But whether this new bottom line would provide the desired silver lining in the overcast political horizons remains to be seen," it cautioned.

Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque, was not immediately available for comment. He had warned that unless national elections are held as scheduled on February 7 the political situation will be "terrible."

The polls were rescheduled last week for February 7 from January 18 after the ruling BNP and some 60 other minor political parties requested the change.

Meanwhile, news reports said David Merrill, the United States ambassador in Dhaka, continued to meet senior government and opposition leader to end the country's political crisis.

Security forces launched a drive against illegal weapons four days ago ahead of voting. They had so far seized 250 guns, 798 home- made bombs and arrested 2,115 suspected "terrorists and criminals," the election commission said.

India

Aircraft Dropping Arms in West Bengal 'Detected'

BK2212151095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The aircraft which dropped arms and ammunition at some villages in Purulia in the eastern state of West Bengal on Sunday [17 December] night has been detected. The state chief secretary, Mr. N. Krishnamurthy, said the aircraft, possibly belonging to a foreign country, was going from Bombay to Madras last night. Seven of the crew and the pilot of the aircraft were apprehended in Bombay last night and they are being interrogated now. The DIG [deputy inspector general], CID [Criminal Investigation Department] of West Bengal Police, has rushed to Bombay to assist in the interrogation.

Patrols Along Border Intensified

BK2312100095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Police patrolling has been intensified along the Bihar-West Bengal border after the recovery of sophisticated arms in Purulia District in West Bengal. The CID [Criminal Investigation Department] superintendent of police, Mr. C.M. Jatuwa, in charge of the investigations, told our Ranchi correspondent that a huge quantity of arms and ammunition have been recovered during search operations in some villages under Jhalda and Jaipur police stations.

The West Bengal director general of police, Mr. R.K. Nigam, reviewed the situation in Purulia District. He has asked the villagers to surrender by Tuesday all arms taken by them in the airdropping. He warned that house-to-house searches will begin in the area from Wednesday if the villagers fail to comply with the request.

As already reported, the aircraft suspected to have been involved in the airdropping of arms has been intercepted. The West Bengal chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, has demanded a high-level inquiry into the incident.

Details Plane's Interception

BK2312100895 Hong Kong AFP in English 0916 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI, Dec 23 (AFP) — Police on Saturday [23 December] questioned six members of a Russian-made plane intercepted overnight by Indian fighters and forced to land in connection with a baffling arms-drop in the country's east six days ago.

Military intelligence officials said army interpreters were questioning the detained crew members of the AN-26 transporter detained in Bombay for details of the air-drop of a huge cache of weapons in the eastern district of Purulia.

Two armed MiG-21s forced the Antonov to land in Bombay Friday as the Russian-made plane after a stopover in the southern Indian city of Madras took off for Karachi in Pakistan in a flight from the Thai beach resort of Phuket.

The intelligence officials in New Delhi said five of them were carrying Latvian passports while the fifth was former British "defence expert."

Bombay police commissioner Ramdeo Tyagi said the owner of the Russian-made plane, reportedly registered in Hong Kong had got off in Thailand before the aircraft started on its two-leg flight for Pakistan.

Military officials said it was too early to reach conclusions in the bizarre case. "We think these Latvians and the plane's pilot are mercenaries working for a foreign government," one official told AFP on Saturday.

They identified them as captain A. Klishn and crew members O. Gaidash, I. Moskuitan, I. Timmerman and I. Antimenko — all holders of Latvian passports.

The Briton has been identified as Peter K. Bleach, now working as a salesman of aircraft and spare parts.

Newspapers and airport officials reported that an unn@med Swiss national escaped after arrest, but the police chief on Saturday denied the report.

Tyagi says the twin-engined plane was suspected to have dropped a consignment of arms over Purulia in the Indian state of West Bengal on Sunday.

Police in Purulya have found crates containing nearly 150 AK-47 and AK-56 assault rifles, rocket launchers, anti-tank grenades, hand grenades and thousands of rounds of ammunition since Sunday.

The weapons worth some four million dollars were attached to at least four parachutes dropped by an unidentified low-flying plane on Sunday night.

The police have also ordered villagers to surrender weapons they may have picked up from the air-drop zone latest by Sunday saying the number of guns could be as high as 700.

The Latvians had been based in Karachi for the past two months but their passports did not have departure stamps from the Pakistani city's airport, he said.

Police chief Tyagi said the aircraft left Karachi on Sunday and landed in the northern holy Hindu town of Benaras. It flew to the West Bengal capital Calcutta the same day and on to Phuket the next day.

It reportedly left Thailand on Thursday and landed in Madras for refuelling. The plane was heading for Karachi when the air force scrambled its fighters jets which marshalled it to Bombay's Santa Cruz airport, Tyagi said.

A number of theories have been advanced to explain the mystery air-drop of arms on Sunday in West Bengal, some 200 kilometres (125 miles) west of India's border with Bangladesh.

According to intelligence officials, one of the boxes of arms bore a label addressed to "The Commandant, Rajendrapur Cantonment, Bangladesh," sparking speculation they were intended for the Bangladesh military.

Newspapers say the aircraft may have strayed into Indian airspace from Bangladesh and parachuted down the arms cache by mistake into Purulia, which has no previous history of political turmoil or militancy.

The beneficiaries may have been tribal guerrillas in the Indian state of Bihar state, which borders West Bengal, and that the arms were part of a destablization plot by India's arch rival Pakistan.

Crew Members Confess Involvement

BK2312162495 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The crew of the cargo aircraft, force landed at Bombay airport yesterday, have reportedly confessed their involvement in Sunday's armsdropping in Purulia District. Official sources in New Delhi said that three of the crew members who belonged to Latvia revealed during the interrogation that they spent several months in Pakistan. A red alert has been sounded and all the airports have been asked to be on the look out for one of the seven crew members, a New Zealander, who is suspected to have escaped after the aircraft landed at the Santa Cruz Airport. Central investigating agencies, including the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] and the West Bengal Police, are actively pursuing the probe into the incident. Senior intelligence officials have rushed to Bombay where the detained six crew members are being interrogated. Meanwhile, the West Bengal home secretary told newsmen in Calcutta today that investigations so far have led to the identification of the local agency to which the arms cache was to be delivered. He, however, refused to name the agency for security reasons. He said the airdropping of arms and ammunition appears to be an international conspiracy involving certain gangs from certain countries. He said the seven crew members involved in the incident were mercenaries and their interrogation revealed that the arms were bought from Bulgaria and three parachutes from South Africa.

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] has urged the government to take the people into confidence on the dumping of arms by a foreign aircraft in the Purulia District of West Bengal. The national executive of the party in a resolution adopted at its meeting in New Delhi today also demanded an inquiry into the incident by a high-level committee of the Defense Ministry. It said those guilty must be punished after fixing the responsibility.

Crew Charged With Sedition

BK2412094895 Hong Kong AFP in English 0649 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bombay, Dec 24 (AFP) — Five Latvians and a Briton suspected of parachuting crates of arms over eastern India last weekend have been charged with sedition, police here said Sunday.

Authorities in West Bengal state, where the arms were dropped, said meanwhile that they had raided suspected hideouts of members of an outlawed Hindu religious cult amid speculation that the arms were meant for the sect.

West Bengal Home Secretary Manish Gupta told AFP that police had conducted a number of raids on offices of the Ananda Marg, or Happy Path, in the West Bengal district of Puruliya, banned 23 years ago for involvement in ritual sacrifice.

The mysterious consignment of arms, including more than 300 AK-47 and AK-56 assault rifles, rocket launchers, anti-tank grenades and thousands of rounds of ammunition, was found by villagers in Puruliya on Monday.

Police here said the crew of a Russian-made AN-26 transport plane forced to land here on Friday while on a flight to Karachi had confessed to dropping the consignment of weapons over Puruliya.

Bombay Police Commissioner Ramdeo Tyagi said the six crew members, whom he described as "mercenaries," had been charged with sedition, which carries the death penalty, and violations of the arms act.

Police are searching for a seventh member of the crew, a New Zealander identified as K. Peter Davy, the owner of the Hong Kong-registered plane who allegedly gave the police the slip after the aircraft was marshalled down.

Tyagi said Davy's photograph was being circulated around the country to ensure his arrest.

West Bengal Home Secretary Gupta said the weapons were purchased in Bulgaria and the parachutes used to drop them were from South Africa.

Police have identified the arrested foreigners as captain A. Klishn and crew members O. Gaidash, I. Moskuitan, I. Timmerman and I. Antimenko — all holders of Latvian passports.

The Briton has been identified as Peter Bleach, a former British defence services officer now working as a salesman of aircraft and spare parts.

The Latvians had been based in Karachi for the past two months but their passports did not have departure stamps from the Pakistani city's airport, according to Bombay police.

Indian police said the aircraft left Karachi December 17 and landed in the northern town of Benaras. It flew to Calcutta later the same day and on to Phuket in Thailand the next day.

It left Thailand on Thursday and landed in Madras for refuelling. The plane was heading for Karachi when the Indian air force scrambled two MiG fighters to force it to land at Bombay airport.

A number of theories have been advanced to explain the mystery air-drop of arms on December 17 in Purulia, some 200 kilometres (125 miles) west of India's border with Bangladesh.

According to intelligence officials, one of the boxes of arms bore a label addressed to "The Commandant, Rajendrapur Cantonment, Bangladesh," sparking speculation they were intended for the Bangladesh military.

There had also been speculation previously that the arms were intended for the Ananda Marg, the Hindu sect banned by the authorities in 1972.

Hindu Sect Buildings Searched

BK2412102895 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In West Bengal, establishments of Ananda Margis [activists of Hindu cult of Ananda Marg] at Ananda Nagar in Pundag of Purulia District are now being searched for arms dropped by a foreign airliner recently. Defense, paramilitary and police personnel began the operation late last night. The AIR Calcutta correspondent Sunit Charabarty reports that all roads leading to Ananda Nagar have been sealed off. The exercise follows a tip-off by the arrested crew of the intercepted AN-26 aircraft. Efforts are also on to bring the crew members from Calcutta where they are to be produced before a Bombay court.

According to the state DG [director general] of police, about 35 crore rupees worth of foreign arms were estimated to have been airdropped. The police chief has asked the villagers to surrender whatever arms they have taken by Tuesday [26 December]. The house-to-house search will begin on Wednesday if the villagers fail to heed the warning.

Another 10 Arrested

BK2412150295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ten persons, including five foreigners, have been arrested from the headquarters of the Ananda Margis [activists of Hindu cult of Ananda Marg] at Ananda Nagar in West Bengal in connection with the recent airdropping of foreign arms in nearby villages. In an operation which began late last night, the police and paramilitary forces made a thorough search of the Ananda Margis' establishments. The exercise followed a tipoff by the arrested crew of the intercepted AN-26 aircraft, which was forcibly landed in Bombay on Friday [22 December]. A senior police official told our Calcutta correspondent that no arms have been found inside Ananda Nagar during the search operation. The foreigners and others will be produced before the court tomorrow.

Reward Announced for Missing Foreigner

BK2412165195 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ten persons, including five foreigners, have been arrested from the headquarters of the Ananda Margis [activists of Hindu cult of Ananda Marg] at Ananda Nagar in Purulia District of West Bengal in connection with the recent airdropping of foreign arms in nearby villages. In an operation lasting about 10 hours which began late last night, the police and paramilitary forces made a thorough search of the Ananda Margis' establishments. The exercise followed a tipoff by the arrested crew of the intercepted AN-26 aircraft which was force-landed in Bombay on Friday [22 December]. A senior police official told our Calcutta correspondent that no arms have been found inside Ananda Nagar during the search operation. The arrested foreigners and others will be produced before the court tomorrow.

Meanwhile, our Ranchi correspondent, quoting police officials investigating the incident at Purulia, reports that more arms and ammunition were recovered from the villages in Jhalda and Jaipur police station areas on the seventh consecutive day today. More than 220 AK-56 assault rifles and a huge quantity of ammunition have been recovered so far.

As reported, the West Bengal Police chief has warned the villagers against holding any such arms in their possession and asked them to return them to the police by Tuesday [26 December]. He said that a house-to-house search will be made from Wednesday to recover any such arms. Our correspondent reports that the Bombay Police have handed the six arrested crew members of the AN-26 aircraft to West Bengal Police. They will be brought to Calcutta very soon. Earlier, they were produced before a court in Bombay.

International police organization, Interpol, has been alerted in the backdrop of the confession made by the crew of the seized AN-26 plane in Bombay. A countrywide manhunt has been launched for Kim Peter Davy who disappeared after the plane was grounded at Bombay. The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] has announced a reward of 100,000 rupees for his arrest. Meanwhile, the CBI and police today recovered two Dragunov rifles, three pistols, ammunition and night-vision devices from the belly of the seized plane. The CBI director, Mr. K. Vijaya Rama Rao, is now in Bombay to supervise interrogation of the six-member crew who are remanded to police custody by a Bombay court for eight days today. The CBI in collaboration with Bombay and West Bengal Police is also examining the various security aspects, including the entry of the plane into the Indian airspace and its refueling in the country.

Interrogations Begin

BK2612100095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] More arms have been recovered from different villages of Purulia District in West Bengal more than a week after the arms airdropping incident. Police and paramilitary forces will undertake a house-to-house search from tomorrow to recover the air-dropped arms with the ultimatum to deposit arms coming to an end today.

The AIR Calcutta correspondent reports that the police have started interrogating the 11 persons, including five foreigners, arrested from the headquarters of the Ananda Marg [Hindu cult] on Sunday. The arrested persons have been remanded to police custody. The six crew members of the An-26 aircraft which dropped the arms are being taken to Purulia from Mumbai [Bombay].

As reported, the central government is to take necessary steps to prevent the recurrence of the arms airdropping incident. Speaking to newspersons in Jammu, the minister of state for home, Syed Sibte Razi, has said that the security agencies are investigating the incident. He described the incident as a breach of international convention and agreement by a foreign airliner.

Aircraft Flying From Pakistan Forced To Land

BK2512033195 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The West Bengal police has seized more arms during the last 24 hours from the villages of Purulia District where large quantities of arms were dropped by a foreign aircraft last week. These included 12 AK-47's and 56 rifles. With this, the total number of weapons recovered from the villages has gone up to 227 assault rifles, 142 grenades, 10 rocket launchers, and huge quantities of ammunition.

Meanwhile, police and paramilitary forces have been withdrawn from the headquarters of Ananda Marg [Hindu cult] in Ananda Nagar. As already reported, acting on a tip-off security personnel arrested 11 persons, including five foreigners, from Ananda Marg's headquarters. However, no arms were recovered. AIR Calcutta correspondent reports that arrested persons will be produced in the court today.

Another AN-26 aircraft, which had flown out of Karachi and bound for Kathmandu was made to force-land at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi yesterday. The IAF [Indian Air Force] radars detected that the plane had deviated from its flight path and entered Delhi air space without permission.

'Nothing Objectionable' Found

BK2512162595 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The 11 Ananda Margis [activists of Hindu cult of Ananda Marg], including foreigners, arrested at Purulia in West Bengal yesterday in connection with the arms dropping case have been remanded to police custody till Monday [1 January] next. The accused were produced before the remand magistrate in Purulia this afternoon. The magistrate ordered that they be kept in police custody for seven days for further interrogation. Meanwhile, the director general of police, Mr. R.K. Nigam, said in Calcutta that no breakthrough could be achieved yet in the case. He ruled out the possibility of any link of the Jharkhandis [activists of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha party] with the incident. He said all the six crew of the foreign aircraft forced to land in Bombay will be taken to Purulia.

Nothing objectionable has been found following the search of a transport aircraft which was forced to land at Delhi airport yesterday. A team of security agencies and the Ministry of External Affairs officials today inspected the aircraft and questioned the crew. Official sources said the aircraft is not being given permission to fly back as several formalities are yet to be completed. The An-26 aircraft with nine foreign nationals from Karachi to Kathmandu was forced to land at the Indira Gandhi Airport yesterday for overflying without clearance.

The minister of state for home, Syed Sibte Razi, has said the government will take all steps to prevent the recurrence of incidents like the airdropping of arms in Purulia District of West Bengal. He said security agencies are thoroughly investigating the case. The minister told newspersons in Jammu today that the incident was a breach of faith, international conventions, and agreements by a foreign airliner.

Official Gives Further Details

BK2612040395 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The An-26 transport aircraft, which was forced to land at the Delhi airport, has been placed under tight security. The aircraft was overflying India without valid permission. A team of officials from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and the Intelligence Bureau have interrogated the nine-member crew of the aircraft. Investigations are on. The police are awaiting permission from the Ministry of External Affairs before carrying out a detailed search. The director general of civil aviation said they had cleared the aircraft's original flight plan. But, the permission to enter the Indian airspace expired on Thursday [21 December] last. The aircraft had also deviated from its original flight path from Karachi to Kathmandu. This is the second such incident. Another AN-26 suspected of dropping arms over Purulia in West Bengal was forced to land at Bombay airport last Friday. [passage omitted]

Police and paramilitary forces are continuing their search operations in Jhalda and Jaipur police station areas of Purulia District following the seizure of more arms. The state director general of police, Mr. R.K. Nigam, has said that the arms act will be applied against all those found to be possessing any of the missing arms and ammunition after the deadline elapses tomorrow.

Omani, Chinese Planes Searched After Arms Drop

BK2612065095 Hong Kong AFP in English 0541 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Report by Pratap Chakravarty]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI, Dec 26 (AFP) — Authorities searched three more planes and chased an Omanese jet in Indian airspace as New Delhi stiffened air security in response to a huge arms-drop in the country's east, officials said Tuesday [26 December].

Indian air force fighters on Monday stalked a Gulfstream jet from Muscat carrying an Omanese minister to China, and police searched two Chinese planes as New Delhi ordered a review into the December 18 arms-drop.

The air force planes allowed the Omanese jet to proceed Monday to China following a mid-air clearance of the passenger aircraft, said Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) officials Tuesday.

Two Chinese Yak-12 planes held in Ahmedabad were also allowed Tuesday to leave for Pakistan.

The latest action followed the force-landing Sunday of a Russian AN-26 in New Delhi and the detention of its nine Ukrainian crew members for allegedly violating Indian airspace.

The fate of the plane, on a fight from the Pakistani city of Karachi to Nepal, would soon be determined, DGCA officials said.

Another cargo plane was searched in the eastern port city of Calcutta late Monday, but details of its origin or destination were not immediately known.

"We are toning up aviation security and streamlining procedures as a precaution against what happened in Puruliya," a DGCA spokesman said of the 10-million dollar arms-drop by another AN-26 last week in the eastern town.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao called an emergency meeting on Christmas day to review the incident, which has now flared into a political issue with the opposition blaming the federal government for the security lapse.

The meeting came two days after the seizure of the AN-26 in Bombay and the arrest of its six crew members on charges that they had air-dropped crates of weapons to the sleepy town of Puruliya in eastern India.

The Antonov was forced to land in Bombay by air force MiG jets while it was on a flight to Karachi in Pakistan. Police said the crew, including five Latvians and a Briton, had confessed to dropping the consignment of weapons.

Police have launched a hunt for the New Zealand owner of the Hong Kong-registered AN-26, and have charged its arrested crew members with sedition, which carries the death sentence.

Officials in Calcutta said that they believe the weapons were intended for a Hindu sect, the Ananda Marg, or "Happy Path," which is based near Puruliya where the crates of arms landed.

Police in the state of West Bengal, where Puruliya is situated, have arrested nine sect members including three Americans, a Greek and an Irishman from the tiny town in connection with the arms drop.

Detectives also arrested two travel agents overnight in New Delhi for the arms drop in eastern India.

The Ananda Marg was outlawed 23 years ago for involvement in ritual sacrifice and most of its leaders arrested. The ban has been now lifted.

The sect has denied involvement in the arms-drop, which included more than 300 assault rifles, rocket launchers, anti-tank grenades and 20,000 rounds of ammunition.

The aircraft which air-dropped the weapons left Karachi on December 17 but was impounded five days later after it criss-crossed India and Thailand with two halts for refuelling.

Prayers Held for Safety of Western Hostages

BK2512160095 Hong Kong AFP in English
1547 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Srinagar, India, Dec 25 (AFP) — Prayers were held Monday [25 December] for the safe release of four westerners held by Muslim militants in troubled Kashmir, police and witnesses said, after 11 people were killed in the Indian state.

"A Kashmiri Muslim lady was killed by an unidentified woman, who was later shot dead by militants in downtown Srinagar on Sunday," a police spokesman said.

Shopkeepers downed their shutters Monday after the news of the killings of these two Muslim women spread, the spokesman said.

Police shot dead five militants overnight Sunday to Monday following fighting in the Kandi area of Baramulla district and in Anatnag district, south of Srinagar.

"Elsewhere in the valley four militants were killed in gun battles since Sunday and some 1,045 gelatin sticks were recovered from pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen militants," army spokesman S. Hari Haran said.

Hari Haran said the militants were planning to use these explosives to blow up bridges and government buildings on January 26, the Republic Day.

Special prayers were, meanwhile, held in different parts of the strife-torn state for the safety of the four Western tourists seized by Al-Faran militants from the Pahalgam woods between July 4 and 8, a witness said.

The Christian priests and Muslim leaders appealed to the militants "in the name of the Almighty" for the quick and safe release of Britons Paul Wells, 23, and Keith Mangan, 33, American Donald Hutchings, 42 and German Dirk Hassert, 26.

The hardline separatist group beheaded a fifth hostage, 27-year-old Norwegian Hans-Christian Ostro in August.

"I appeal to the captors to release them on a Christmas day to end the agony of their family members," said Yaseen Malik, chief of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front.

The Al-Faran group, which India claims is a splinter faction of Harkatul Ansar separatist group made up of Afghan fighters, is demanding the release of 15 of their jailed colleagues in a swap for the western tourists.

The Indian Government, which has not been in contact with the Al-Faran since November 26, has rejected the demand and ruled out a commando-style rescue operation as too risky.

More than 12,000 people have died in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, since 1989 when separatist groups stepped up the anti-Indian rebellion in the Kashmir Valley.

Pakistani Nuclear Program Said Posing Threat

BK2312133195 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 1230 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has made it clear that Pakistan's nuclear program is the one which poses a real danger to regional and global peace and stability. Dismissing Pakistan's statement on reports that New Delhi is preparing for a nuclear test, a spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said it is a familiar example of its anti-India propaganda. He said Pakistan's statement tries to divert attention from its own nuclear weapons program which is of grave concern to the international community. New Delhi has authoritatively responded to such reports which Islamabad seeks to exploit.

'Powerful Explosion' Damages Building in Jammu

BK2512091295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, a powerful explosion rocked the office of the deputy commissioner in Rajaori this morning. A PTI report says no one was injured in the explosion. It damaged parts of the building of the divisional commissioner of Jammu. Army experts have reached the site of the blast and police are searching for the culprits.

'About 300' Feared Dead in Haryana Fire

BK2312134095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] About 300 people are feared killed in a devastating fire at a function at Dabwali town in Sirsa [Haryana] this afternoon. The fire broke out at a building where students of a local school and their parents had assembled to participate in its annual function. The mishap occurred at about 0200 PM when the function was going on. About 200 people are reported injured. The building had only one gate and the fire engulfed it within minutes. The injured have been admitted to Dabwali, Sirsa, and Bhatinda civil hospitals.

Police Raid Temple After Sikh Politician Killed

BK2612074495 Hong Kong AFP in English 0640 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI, Dec 26 (AFP) — Indian police stormed the Golden Temple in the Sikh holy city of Amritsar in an overnight raid to flush out the alleged killer of a top Sikh politician, officials said Tuesday [26 December].

The raid on the Sikh religion's holiest shrine was the first major police action there since May 1988 when army commandos shot dead 36 Sikh separatists in a 11-day siege of the complex.

Officials in Amritsar said police entered the Golden Temple in an attempt to capture the alleged mastermind of the August 31 assassination of Beant Singh, the Sikh chief minister of the northern state of Punjab.

But city police chief S.S. Chhina said no arrests were made after a search of the white marble shrine.

The raid came three days after three Sikh separatists were arrested in Punjab for plotting to kill Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Police said two of the "hardcore terrorists" arrested on Friday were also involved in the slaying of Beant Singh, credited with stamping out Sikh militancy through a relentless drive in the state.

The police say the three suspects were involved in a "Pakistani- aided conspiracy" to assassinate Rao and the chief minister of adjoining Haryana state, Bhajan Lal.

One of the three suspects, Jagtar Singh Hawara, reportedly told officials their ringleader was staying in the Golden Temple, police said.

Hawara was a member of the Babbar Khalsa Sikh militant group and one of the main conspirators behind the assassination of Beant Singh by a suicide bomber which left 16 other people dead, according to police.

The arrests have brought the number of people detained in connection with the politician's murder to eight.

Rao's assassination was to have taken place on January 3 during a visit by the prime minister to Patiala in Punjab to inaugurate an Indian Science Congress.

A Sikh separatist drive to establish a separate homeland in Punjab has left more than 20,000 people dead since 1983 but has been on the wane in recent years.

Party Head Urges Government Not To Make N-Bomb

BK2512020795 Varanasi AJ in Hindi 3 Dec 95 p 5

[AJ News Service Report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gorakhpur, 2 December — Mulayam Singh Yadav, the national president of the Samajwadi Party, said here today that the Central Government has become badly trapped in the claws of the imperialist forces; and in the wake of the entry of multinational companies into the country and the implementation of Dunkel proposals, it has become difficult even to think of socialism. Yadav was speaking as the guest of honor at a conference of socialist intellectuals on the subject of socialism in the Indian perspective. He called upon the intellectuals to counter the efforts being made by the imperialist forces under an international conspiracy to break the unity and territorial integrity of India and to destroy the social harmony in the country. He said the major powers want to create a third world war by indirectly provoking Pakistan against India, so that they can sell their arms.

Mulayam Singh Yadav said the existing system needs to be changed to strengthen democracy in India. Only then can the people achieve social justice and the country become prosperous. He said the intellectuals, journalists, and writers who played an important role in the struggle for country's independence should now come forward and discharge their duty in bring about a change in the existing system in the country.

Mulayam Singh Yadav said India should not manufacture the nuclear bomb so that an arms race can be avoided. Considering the fact that we are still struggling to provide electricity, fertilizers, medicine, and irrigation facilities to our people, we should work to improve the lot of the common man instead of making the bomb. He said the country is now grappling with problems like regionalism, separatism, and religious hysteria. We, therefore, need to wage a massive struggle against inequality, exploitation, loot and plunder, and economic disparity. The Samajwadi Party leader said the Central Government's wrong policies have encouraged capitalism and the gap between the rich and the poor is widening day by day.

Alliance Wants Basu To Lead 'Third Force'

BK2512154195 Calcutta ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA in Bengali 16 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] New Delhi, 15 Dec — Communist Party of India-Marxist [CPI-M] sources say that West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu might play a leading role in campaigning on behalf of the third force in the coming general elections. Not only the Janata Dal and Samajwadi Party, but leftist parties such as the CPI [Communist Party of India] and Forward Bloc also want to see Basu playing a leading role in the 1996 elections. Since Vishwanath Pratap Singh has dissociated himself somewhat from active politics for various reasons, there is no other national leader except Basu who can lead the third force. CPI-M sources say this is why the party is seriously considering the suggestion, though party leaders do not want to say anything publicly at the moment. They say that if Vishwanath Pratap Singh does not come forward to lead the third force, the CPI-M will consider it.

CPI-M sources made it clear that if Basu takes a leading role in the election campaigning, it does not mean he will become prime minister if the alliance comes to power. The CPI-M is still insistent that it will not join the government. CPI-M leaders admit, however, there is considerable pressure on the party from allied parties to change its stance. It was Vishwanath Pratap Singh among the leftist leaders who first proposed that Basu be projected as the leader and appointed prime minister if the third force comes to power. Basu openly declined the offer, but Vishwanath Pratap Singh, S.R. Bommai, and other ranking leaders of the Janata Dal as well as Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav still want to project Basu as the future prime minister. Although Basu disagrees with the idea, requests are still coming in asking him at least to take the lead in campaigning for the third force.

The CPI-M leadership is now considering the issue. A substantial number of party leaders feel that in addition to his own state, Basu will have to spend a lot more time campaigning in other states as well. Given the situation, the problem is who will fill Basu's place in his own state. A number of Politburo members say this can be done by Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, Anil Biswas, or Biman Basu. Since the CPI-M's position in West Bengal is not as good as in the past, it is not known whether the state unit of the party will agree to this proposal. Another factor is Basu's old age; it is doubtful how much time Basu can spare for other states. This is why the CPI-M leadership does not want any speculation in this regard at the moment.

The party's Politburo meeting here yesterday and today extensively reviewed the current political situation in the country. It is not known whether anything specific about Basu's election campaigning was discussed. The CPI-M does not want to confine itself within the parameters of the National Front and left parties; it is interested in forging alliances with other parties in various states such as Mulayam Singh Yadav's party in Uttar Pradesh, V. Gopalaswamy's Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu, and Asom Gano Parishad in Assam. The meeting decided that the CPI-M will continue efforts to include various other parties besides the National Front and leftist alliance in the third force. These parties are also pressing Basu to take over the leadership. Discussions were held during the CPI-M meeting on whether there is a possibility of elections before April. It decided to begin final preparations for the elections right away. The next Central Committee meeting will deal extensively with the issue of campaigning and candidates. Basu returned to Calcutta after attending the Politburo meeting.

Agencies report from Trivandrum that the left parties might join the federal government if the National Front-left alliance becomes a single majority alliance. This was stated by CPI General Secretary Indrajit Gupta while inaugurating the state conference of the party. He added that "our major partner, CPI-M, has decided not to join any government at the federal level." Gupta said that many people will claim the prime minister's post if the National Front-left alliance wins the majority in the elections. Then we will have to cull and prune them. He said that many National Front allies want to see Basu as the prime minister. The question is whether he will agree to take up the leadership of a conglomeration of parties having diverse policies and ideologies.

Iran

U.S. Move To Fund 'Covert' Operations Criticized

Velayati Comments

LD2412215795 Tehran IRNA in English 2132 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 24, IRNA — Islamic Iran is the throbbing heart of the ummah and certainly Muslims around the world will not allow the U.S. and the Zionist regime to decide their fate, said Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati in reference to the recent decision of the U.S. Congress to finance covert operations against Iran.

in an exclusive interview to appear Monday morning in the Persian daily 'IRAN', Velayati pointed out that the dlrs. 20-million U.S. budget approval to confront Iran, was a clear example of "state terrorism" and was in fact not directed at Iran alone but against the whole world of Islam.

The Iranian Government has categorically condemned the hostile act, he added.

Addressing himself to U.S. statesmen Velayati made it clear: "The Iranian nation does not interfere in the affairs of other countries and you should also know that Iran will not allow other countries to interfere in its internal affairs."

The Islamic awakening which Iran has inspired with its insistence on respect for human rights has sent shivers down the spine of hegemonist powers, and a frustrated Washington, humiliated since 1979 following failure after failure of its multifaceted plots to bring down the Islamic system, on last Thursday openly admitted its policy of state terrorism against a sovereign state by sanctioning the said amount.

Velayati, who left today for neighbouring Turkmenistan was asked by the daily his views on the Caspian Sea, and said that any long term operations to explore and exploit the marine resources of the Caspian or to protect its fragile environment, were not possible before adopting of a legal regime by the five littoral states.

He called on Caspian states to be more serious and sincere in their efforts regarding adoption of the legal regime for the world's largest inland sea.

Asked what views do Iran and Russia hold in connection with the proposed legal regime, he disclosed that the two countries share the view that the Caspian belongs to littoral states and that no other countries have the right to interfere in the affairs of the region.

He added that Iran and Russia also believe that the agreement of all five littoral states is necessary for determining the legal regime of the Caspian and no single state should enjoy any special rights in this regard.

Besides Iran and Russia, the other three countries bordering the oblong Caspian, are Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

The Caspian is rich in hydrocarbon and marine reserves, and wanton exploitation of its resources, would entail dangerous consequences for the ecology of the region.

Says Shows 'Psychological Warfare'

LD2612122995 Tehran IRNA in English 1152 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati stressed here Monday that the recent move of the U.S. Congress to set a budget for operations against Iran means intensification of psychological warfare against Iran following the failure of Washington's sanctions against Tehran.

Speaking in a question and answer session at Tehran's Imam Sadiq University, Velayati added that the American plan to intensify sanctions against Iran has been rejected even by its allies. He added that the World Trade Organization in its recent statement has said the U.S. action is against the international trade regulations.

Asked to comment on U.S. green light to Iran and the future of Tehran-Washington relations, he said the U.S. Administration cannot tolerate a religious government in the world.

Velayati underlined that the U.S. Government is a tool in hands of Zionists who are using Washington as a means to press Iran.

Denying rumors on his candidacy for presidency, Velayati stressed that he does not intend to run in the presidential election.

On Iran's policy towards the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC), Velayati said that the Islamic Republic has different relations with each member of the council. Iran enjoys excellent relations with Oman and Qatar and cordial and close relations with Kuwait, he said.

On baseless charges brought up by German prosecutor general against Information Minister Hojatoleslam 'Ali Fallahian, he said that the prosecutor is free to make any remark but such statements are not confirmed by German officials.

If Europe wants to create a better image of itself in the hearts of Muslims, it should work towards establishing friendly relations with Iran, the foreign minister concluded.

Official: 'State Terrorism'

LD2412063795 Tehran IRNA in English
0539 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 24, IRNA — Spokesman of Iran's Foreign Ministry Mahmud Mohammadi here Saturday condemned the allocation of a dlrs. 20 million by the U.S. House of Representatives for operations against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mohammadi added that the decision amounted to outright terrorist operations and was against the international law and Article One of the Algiers Declaration.

He said the decision of the congress to support terrorist groups against the Islamic Republic is a blatant example of state-terrorism being practiced by the U.S. Administration. He added Washington would have to face the consequences of its unabashed support for terrorism.

The Iranian official observed that such threats against the revolutionary people of Iran would be fruitless. He said during the past few years the Americans had behaved against the interests of the people of Iran and had thereby only fanned the flames of the fire of the wrath of the Iranians against those policies.

Elsewhere, he also deplored clashes between Eritrea and the republic of Yemen, and voiced his sorrow over Eritrea's resort to force. Mohammadi expressed hope that both countries would exercise self-restraint and try to solve their differences by negotiations.

He warned that the enemies of the developing nations as well as the Zionist regime could possibly be found behind that and similar developments because those enemies were out to pit Arab nations against their African neighbors with the idea of keeping them from progress.

Envoy on 'Aggressive' Measures

LD2412101395 Tehran IRNA in English
0916 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New York, Dec. 24, IRNA — Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations Kamal Kharrazi here Saturday said the measures taken last week by the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran stemmed from the pressures exerted by Zionist circles and aggressive nature of Washington.

Kharrazi stressed that the moves demonstrate the aggressive nature of the U.S. Administration, saying that although it has a democratic appearance, Washington was ready to reach its goals by fighting against the independence and advancement of developing nations and resorting to various unlawful and inhumane means.

According to reports, the U.S. Senate on Wednesday passed a bill intensifying pressure on foreign financial institutions and oil companies that have dealings with Iran.

Meanwhile, the U.S. House of Representatives has allocated a dlrs. 20 million budget for activities that are directed against the Islamic Republic.

Kharrazi also said that U.S. submission to pressures from Zionist circles and their agents in Congress is not justifiable and are a blatant contradiction of international laws and the respect for other countries' sovereignty.

He added that the latest American move once more indicated that Washington, contrary to its claims, pays no heed to international norms.

He recalled that on the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, President Bill Clinton remarked that the U.S. would act whenever the international community did not submit to pressure.

The Iranian representative at the United Nations called the world's attention to Washington's unlawful moves, either by interfering in the internal affairs of other countries or imposing economic sanctions against them. He said that the recent American moves were clear manifestations of state terrorism designed to prevent the economic and political development of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In conclusion, Kharrazi pointed out that U.S. hostility towards Iran would undoubtedly double the detemination of the Iranian nation to maintain the country's independence and fight against domination- seeking powers.

Majles Urged Toward Same

NC2612101195 Paris AFP in English
0859 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 26 (AFP) - The Iranian parliament was urged here on Tuesday [26 December] to approve a budget for covert action against the United States to retaliate against similar measures taken by Washington against the Islamic republic.

The hardline newspaper JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI called for an "immediate" vote on the measure to foil "before it has a chance to turn into action" a 20-million-dollar anti-Iranian program approved by the U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday and accepted by the White House.

"The first step is to approve a fund for anti-U.S. liberation movements to help them target U.S. interests throughout the world and make the United States regret its crimes against Iran," it proposed.

"It is an urgent duty for the Islamic parliament to adopt the budget to serve as a preventative measure against U.S. idiotic moves against Iranian people," the daily said.

"Iran has a legal and moral right to destroy the centers of plots against its people and thwart America's satanic schemes."

The U.S. program, aimed at moderating Iran's Islamic regime, is a modified version of an original one intended to overthrow the Tehran government, which was steadfastly opposed by U.S. President Bill Clinton and the Senate.

Iran has condemned the program and warned it would encourage terrorism.

Official Criticizes UN Resolution on Human Rights

LD2412105695 Tehran IRNA in English
1036 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 24, IRNA — The recent resolution issued by the third committee of the 50th United Nations General Assembly regarding the human rights situation in Iran is simply based on political considerations, far from reality and in violation of the normal procedures of the U.N., a foreign ministry official said.

Speaking to the English-language daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' published Sunday, Deputy Foreign Minister for International Affairs Javad Zarif said that the text of the resolution has been dictated to committee members by the U.S. and the Zionist regime.

"The Israeli regime's record of human rights is the worst in the world," he underlined.

He further asserted that some articles of the resolution were based on groundless accusations such as the one referring to the murder of the Christian pastors.

Three members of the terrorist Mujahedeen Khalq Organization (MKO), in an open court session attended by several foreign diplomats, reporters as well as family members of the victims, confessed that they had killed the pastors at the orders of the terrorist MKO, Zarif stressed.

The third committee's resolution still calls on Iran to give clarifications related to the kiling of the pastors, he said adding "this example simply indicates that the resolution is politically motivated."

Contrary to U.N. procedure, the recent report on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic, was not prepared by Maurice Danby Capithorpe, the special representative of the commission on human rights, but by members of the committee who were under the influence of the U.S. and the Zionist regime, therefore, it has no legal basis, he told the paper.

He said that there is no doubt that different countries voted for the resolution under American and Isreali pressures.

"In the first report, former U.N. special representative on human rights in Iran, A. Galindo Pohl, had based some articles of his report on facts, but there were several unfounded accusations against Iran in the same report," Zarif added.

The U.S. later pressed the U.N. secretary-general to dismiss Galindo Pohl, Zarif said. "It shows that all U.N. reports on situation of human rights in Iran have been prepared under the U.S. pressure," he concluded.

Kuwaiti Envoy Comments on Ties With Tehran

LD2412122695 Tehran IRNA in English
1154 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 24, IRNA — Ambassador of Kuwait here, 'Abdallah 'Abd-al-'Aziz Al-Duwaikh expressed satisfaction with the growing trend of Tehran-Kuwait ties, reported TEHRAN TIMES Daily here Sunday.

Speaking to the English-language paper in an exclusive interview, the ambassador said that bilateral relation was at its best level and that the exchange of visits between the two countries' officials was a clear indication of the fact.

Noting that the annual Iranian exports to Kuwait increased from $50 million to $100 million last year, Al-Duwaikh touched on the establishment of Iran-Kuwait joint chamber of commerce and described it as the best organ which can help bolster bilateral economic and trade ties.

Referring to the 60,000 Iranians residing in Kuwait, the ambassador described them as skilled workers and expert technicians adding that the Kuwaiti employers were satisfied with their work.

He expressed the readiness of his respective country to employ more Iranian workers in coordination with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Iran.

Praising Iran's indispensible role in maintaining the Persian Gulf security, the ambassador called it as very crutial and strategic and further stressed that regional countries should themselves preserve security of the region.

He said that the nation of Kuwait was sorrowful about the Iraqi nation undergoing the ordeal following the United Nations sanctions imposed on it.

Al-Duwaikh referred to the negotiations held by the Iraqi and Kuwaiti officials on the fate of 605 Kuwaitis reported missing in action (MIA) and said that Kuwait would welcome endeavors of any country including Iran in this connection, wrote the paper.

Official on Ties With Iraq, Persian Gulf States

LD2412113295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian
1030 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Ministry deputy for international affairs described the release of a new UN General Assembly resolution on human rights conditions in Iran as having resulted from U.S. pressures and threats. [passage omitted]

In another part of his news conference, Javad Zarif considered the Islamic Republic of Iran's relations with its neighboring countries as good and said: We are ready to talk with the Persian Gulf littoral states on all issues, including nonaggression, supervision of military purchases, and other regional cooperation.

On Iran's relations with Iraq and a visit to Iraq by [Foreign Minister] Velayati, Zarif said: A visit by the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign minister to Iraq requires preliminaries, including clarification on the Iranian POW's in that country.

Naval, Missile Military Maneuvers in Persian Gulf

LD2212212495 Tehran IRNA in Persian
1638 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Bushehr — The "Ra'd" [thunder] vessel-missile maneuver will be held in the waters of the Persian Gulf by the land-to-sea missile units and the missile frigates of the Islamic revolution's guards corps on Saturday.

Colonel Parviz Qousi, acting commander of the Ra'd maneuver said the aim of the exercise was to demonstrate the missile units' missile power and its combat readiness for the defense of the sovereignty of the Islamic republic.

He said the Ra'd maneuver will take place in four stages between the 51' and 52' 30" longitudes in the northern territorial waters and coastal areas of the Persian Gulf. Colonel Qousi added that coordination between coastal missile units with missile frigates will be demonstrated for the first time in the maneuver.

During the maneuver 35 [operational] series — including coast- to-sea missile operations, surface and air fire, coastal bombardment, blind sailing, modern warfare, convoy escort, establishing of radar sites, refueling at sea and tactical radar search — will be carried out.

On the capacity of the vessel-missile maneuvers, he said that the exercises will include a number of long-range missile frigates; dozens of fast missile frigates; dozens of heavy and medium weight combat and support frigates; four land-to-sea and defense missile units; and radar and monitoring sites.

Second Phase Ends

LD2412110195 Tehran IRNA in English
1047 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bushehr, Dec. 24, IRNA — The second phase of the 'Ra'd' (Thunder) missile maneuvers launched by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) missile fleet, ended in the northern part of the Persian Gulf today.

Deputy commander of the military exercises, Colonel Parviz Qowsi, added that the second phase of the maneuvers were carried out successfully and concentrated on surface and air shooting and installation of sites, as well as refuelling at sea.

The maneuvers, which were aimed at displaying the combat power of the IRGC naval and missile units in defending the territories of the Islamic Republic of Iran, started Saturday in the area near Kharg Island, northern part of the Persian Gulf.

Ayatollah: Youth Group Safeguards Islamic Values

LD2312114895 Tehran IRNA in English
1124 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 23, IRNA — Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati has said that he supports for any movement which is to safeguard the Islamic values and that he has no connection with any of the existing groups or associations, reported TEHRAN TIMES daily here Saturday.

Speaking to the English-language paper in an exclusive interview, the member of the Guardians Council described Ansar Hezbollah group as a group of revolutionary youth who defend revolution, law and velayat-e-faqih (the leadership) in practice.

They devoted their life to disseminate what is good and prevent what is evil, said the ayatollah adding that the group members had no administrative responsibility, yet, they actively took part in Islamic activities.

He noted that the group, like other social strata, is committed to safeguard the Islamic and revolutionary values.

While dismissing any links with the group, Ayatollah Jannati expressed his support for any pure movement aiming to safeguard the Islamic values and ideals.

He stressed that Ansar Hezbollah was only giving verbal notifications within the legal framework and respect the law. Meanwhile, the ayatollah called for certain mechanism in a bid to prevent the overlap of Hezbollah activities with the executive organs in the country.

The official noted that every responsible citizen should try to safeguard Islamic and revolutionary values, otherwise, he added, the nation would turn into an indifferent society.

He further denounced the deceitful propaganda campaign launched by the global arrogance, the Zionist regime and certain mass media against Hezbollah inside the country, wrote the paper.

Tehran on IRGC's Technical-Scientific Achievements

NC2612072695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first exhibition of the technical-engineering achievements of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps [IRGC], which has been organized to acquaint people with the technological capabilities of the IRGC in the military field and in the reconstruction of the country's economy, was inspected yesterday evening by our president. In addition to exhibiting reconstructed military installations, the IRGC's activities in developments such as the construction of dams, tunnels, highways, and gas and oil pipelines are also being exhibited.

Also, in addition to completed activities and projects under implementation, an agreement was signed yesterday between the ministry of agriculture and the IRGC for the construction of 14 agro-industrial units in the country's border areas. Under this project, 700,000 hectares of land in the country will be placed under cultivation and, in addition to developing major parts of the country, this project will also play a major role in creating jobs and increasing production.

In tandem with the exhibition, it was announced at a conference on manufacturing and production which convened yesterday, with the objective of examining the latest scientific-research achievements and allowing for an exchange of views among experts, that 55 percent of motor and body parts for war planes are manufactured inside the country. The quality of these spare parts is far superior to similar spare parts that are manufactured abroad. It was also stated at the conference that since the beginning of the current [Iranian] year [beginning 21 March 1995] until the end of Mehr [month ending 22 October], some 6,200 requests by the private sector for industrial investments in the country have been approved and this is 14 percent more than the requests made during the first seven months of last year. The important point is that some of these requests concern investment in advanced fields such as the manufacture of pacemakers and medical equipment which call for high technological know-how and standards.

On the one hand, all these figures speak of the extensive mobilization which has taken place with the active participation of all the country's domestic forces and capabilities for growth and development. On the other hand, they manifest the fact that the extensive investments that have been made during the past few years in a bid to elevate technical knowledge and especially industrial projects in the country have borne fruit. And all these are happening at a time when the Islamic Republic of Iran is under major pressures, such as the economic sanctions. However, not only has it not been harmed by these sanctions, but it has further accelerated its movement toward self-sufficiency and reliance on domestic forces and capabilities.

The construction and operation of immense industrial complexes such as the Mobarakeh Steel Complex, the Bandar-e Emam [Khomeyni] Petrochemical Complex, and dozens of other infrastructural projects have not only made it possible to ensure the raw material needed by most industries come from domestic sources, but have also created numerous opportunities for new industrial investments and for the promotion and growth of the country's industrial capabilities.

Moreover, elevating the technical knowledge of domestic expert forces has made it possible for our country to export technical and engineering services in fields such as highway, dam, and oil installation construction. These have gradually turned into major sources of foreign exchange income and are decreasing the country's economic dependence on crude oil exports.

It is by relying on such profound changes and outstanding achievements that not only will the enemy's sanctions and plots be thwarted, but Iran will once again turn into the cradle of the great Islamic civilization.

Pakistan

Reportage on Car-Bomb Explosion in Peshawar

Afghanistan Denies Involvement

BK2212165595 Hong Kong AFP in English 1639 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec 22 (AFP) — The government of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani Friday denied involvement in Thursday's devastating car bomb blast in the north western Pakistani city of Peshawar, Radio Kabul, monitored here, said.

Condemning the blast, in which scores were killed, it said the Pakistani Government was blaming the bombing on Kabul "to divert public attention" from the problems faced by its own people.

The Afghan people did not resort to terrorist acts even during the 1979-89 Soviet occupation of their country, the radio, controlled by Rabbani loyalists, said.

The Afghan Government was "deeply grieved" by the casualties and prays for the early recovery of those injured in the blast, it added.

Officials here said so far 33 bodies had been recovered, while state-run Pakistan television reported 42 deaths. Newspapers and rescue workers put the death toll at 60.

Police sources in Peshawar said more than 50 Afghan refugees had been detained for questioning. The authorities in the North West Frontier Province have set up three investigation teams of police and intelligence agencies and manhunt for those involved in the bombing has been launched.

Investigation Detailed

BK2212140895 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] Government has constituted three teams headed by senior officials to arrest the culprits of last night's car bomb blast in Peshawar. The provincial government has also declared tomorrow as the official mourning day for the victims of the heinous crime. PTV's Peshawar representative says that at least 42 people were killed and over 100 injured in the brutal incident.

A massive rescue operation continued during the night and today. Jawans [soldiers] of Pakistan Army, PAF [Pakistan Air Force], Cantonment Board, WAPDA [Water and Power Development Authority], Municipal Corporation, Health Department, and other agencies took part in the relief and rescue operations. Our representative Rafiq Goraya says that the people of Peshawar showed exemplary discipline, courage, and unity to deal with the situation. They extended all help to the victims and fully cooperated with the administration.

According to preliminary reports, the car bomb explosion was of an intensity of 25 kg to 30 kg. The rescue and relief teams have extinguished the fire and removed the debris from the Sadr Bazaar and life is now normal. At least 10 cars were burned in the explosion. These have also been removed from the scene of the blast. According to officials sources, out of the dead, 25 have been identified. They were buried today at different places. The daughter of the NWFP governor and her two children, who were also killed in the blast, were buried in their ancestral graveyard in Mardan. Fifty injured persons were admitted in various hospitals of the city. Of these, 31 were discharged after proper medical aid today. However, 19 injured are still in government hospitals for treatment.

A high-level meeting was held in Peshawar today to review the situation arising out of the brutal incident and take necessary measures for the protection of life and property of the people. The meeting was also attended by the chief minister, Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao, and the interior minister, retired Major General Nasirullah Babar. The chief minister directed the concerned three teams to apprehend the saboteurs quickly and progress of the investigations should be reported to him on daily basis. The provincial government also announced a cash award of 1 million rupees to the person whose information could lead to the arrest of the culprits of this brutal act. The meeting also set up a crisis management board to deal with such a situation. The interior minister expressed the confidence that the culprits would be soon arrested as the chief minister, Mr. Sherpao, is personally handling the situation. The opposition in the NWFP Assembly has also condemned the act of violence and said that it was the prime responsibility of the government to take necessary measures for the protection of life and property of the citizens. The opposition also supported tomorrow's mourning day.

Bhutto Chairs Meeting on Security

LD2412142495 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 1100 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] A high-level meeting held in Peshawar today [24 December] with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in the chair reviewed the law and order situation and decided to further tighten security measures to contain terrorism. The prime minister directed the [Northwest Frontier Province] provincial administration to boost efforts for early arrest in Thursday's [21 December] car bomb blast [in Peshawar]. The prime minister also directed that crisis management centers should be set up in all the provincial headquarters, which should work round the clock on all days and monitor any emergency situation, to take prompt action against terrorist activities. [passage omitted]

Earlier, the prime minister visited the spot of the explosion, where she was briefed about the losses. [passage omitted] The prime minister was told during the briefing that 37 dead bodies had been recovered and search was continuing for the missing people. Seventeen vehicles were gutted by the explosion, which caused heavy loss of property as well. [passage omitted]

The federal minister for information and broadcasting, Mr. Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal, speaking on the occasion, said the prime minister has increased the sum of award [as heard] from 1 million to 10 million rupees for the information which could help in tracing the culprits involved in the bomb blast. [passage omitted]

More on Meeting

BK2412151595 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto presided over a high-level meeting held in Peshawar today and reviewed the law and order situation in the wake of the car bomb explosion in Peshawar on Thursday last. The meeting was briefed by the NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] chief minister, IG [inspector general] of police, and representatives of other law enforcing agencies about the explosion and the progress made so far in investigating the crime. The meeting was informed that significant progress has been made in the investigations.

The meeting decided that in addition to the award announced by the NWFP Government, the Federal Government will give 10 million rupees to anyone offering information reaching up to the arrest of culprits. It was also decided that the Federal Government would pay 100,000 rupees each to the families of the deceased and 50,000 rupees each to injured. This will be in addition to the compensation already announced by the provincial government.

The prime minister directed that crisis management centers be set up at all provincial headquarters on the same lines as in Sindh to be manned by a minister or high official. These centers should remain functional for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The center will serve as a nerve center for monitoring and taking prompt action against any terrorist activity anywhere in the province. The meeting appealed to the citizens to immediately report to the crisis management center any incident of terrorism, which would get into action immediately on receipt of such information. Supplementary grants will be provided for setting up of crisis management center in NWFP, if necessary.

The meeting was informed that the Frontier Police would be modernized and upgraded to enable it to effectively combat terrorism. The modernization of Frontier Police and the provision of necessary equipment would be financed through allocation in the next year's budget. The meeting was also informed that rules and procedural formalities would be simplified to facilitate expeditious purchase of necessary equipment for the police. The meeting further decided that a Frontier Corps wing would be raised for Dir and Malakand and the provision for it would be made in the next year's budget.

The meeting also reviewed the functioning of the NGO's [nongovernment organizations] and noted that most of the 100 of them were working satisfactorily in the province, the activities of some of them were not compatible with their declared charter and purpose. The meeting decided to set up a committee comprising representatives of interior and foreign ministries, Prime Minister's Secretariat, and relevant agencies to review their activities. The meeting was attended by the governor and chief minister of NWFP, federal ministers for interior, foreign affairs, information and defense, and high officials of the federal and provincial governments.

Later, the prime minister visited the site of the car bomb blast in Peshawar, Sadr, where she was given a briefing by the IG police. The prime minister also visited the Lady Reading Hospital and inquired about the welfare of those injured. Talking to them, the prime minister condemned the brutal explosion and declared that the criminals would not go unpunished. Earlier on arrival in Peshawar, the prime minister went straight to the Governor's House and condoled with the governor the death of his daughter and grandchildren in the bomb blast.

The police have asked people to be vigilant to foil the designs of saboteurs. In an appeal, the police have urged the people to closely observe their surroundings, particularly at cinema halls, shopping centers; and in case of any suspicions, report to the police. As a precautionary measure, nothing should be accepted from a stranger and in case of a suspect person, vehicle, motorcycle, cycle, or shopping bag, police emergency center should immediately be informed.

Senator Blames India

BK2412105195 Islamabad THE NATION in English 24 Dec 95 p 14

[Report by Shamim Shahid]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar — Senator Qazi Hussain Ahmad, Central Amir of Jamaat-i-Islami while exonerating Arab militants and Afghan Government from their involvement in Thursday last tragic bomb explosion, has held India responsible for this act.

He was talking to newsmen at the site of bomb explosion on Saturday. Earlier he attended Quran Khawani [recitation of the Koran] arranged by the Traders Action Committee for the departed souls.

To a question, Qazi said, "India is our first enemy. India is not only involved in Karachi crises, but is also engineering terroristic activities which could be assumed from explosion incidents of Faisalabad and Lahore. India wanted to divert attention of the Muslims from Kashmir through such brutal activities", he maintained.

Without mentioning name of any force, Qazi Hussain Ahmad said that no one could rule out possibility of those forces involvement in the explosion who have close ties with that country. However, he ruled out possibility of Arab militants involvement in the bomb explosions saying that they are innocent and have left their motherland as a result of President Hussain Mubarak's brutalities against them.

Referring to rumours about Prof. Rabbani government's involvement in the terrorist activities, Qazi Hussain Ahmad disagreed with these allegations, saying it a part of the conspiracy being engineered against unity of Muslim Ummah. He said that in the last 16 years not only Pakistanis and Afghans, but even Muslims of this region become united. He was of the view that this unity is contrary to interests of anti-Islamic forces, therefore, they are trying to shatter it by engineering such conspiracies. He said that through such unity, Muslims of this region could emerge a strong bloc in this region.

Asked whether he favors evolving of a joint strategy for countering such type of terrorist activities with assembling government and opposition across a table, Qazi Hussain replied in negative. "Government is not so competent to sit with and evolve a strategy against terrorism," he remarked. He alleged that government had destroyed all institutions and utilized all resources in its victimization campaign against its opponents. He said under well planned conspiracy the government was working against religious forces and trying to enforce secular system in the country.

Senator Qazi Hussain Ahmad expressed grave concern over the tragic bomb explosion and expressed sympathies with the bereaved families. He urged to forge unity and eject those elements from their ranks who were bent upon destroying national unity and solidarity for the pleasure of anti-Islamic forces.

Afghan Detained

BK2612061195 Islamabad THE NATION in English 25 Dec 95 pp 1,13

[Report by Robina Tariq]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ABBOTABAD — On the tip of sensitive agencies Hazara police nabbed a suspect allegedly involved in recent Peshawar car bomb blast on December 21, in which dozens of people were killed.

A highly-placed source on the condition on anonymity told THE NATION on Sunday that the secret agencies informed the local police about an Afghan refugee who was residing in Abbottabad and came here from Peshawar on Friday morning when the incident took place there. The local police rounded up the suspect on Saturday night who is believed to be involved in Peshawar car blast on December 21 besides other bomb blasts in the country during the last decade. The suspect was later sent to CIA [Criminal Investigation Division] Peshawar for further investigations.

The source further disclosed that police apprehended the Afghan national on the basis of description provided by the eye witnesses in Peshawar who had a look at suspect before he escaped from the scene after parking his car behind the car of SP [Superintendent of Police] on December 21.

Bombers Said Identified

BK2612100995 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 25 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Rahimullah Yusufzai in Peshawar and Majid Qazi in Quetta]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Syed Masud Shah, Inspector General [IG] of Police, NWFP [Northwest Frontier Province] claimed here Sunday that his investigation teams have zeroed in one the culprits responsible for Thursday's [21 December] devastating bomb explosion in Peshawar.

Talking to The News late Sunday, he said very little work needed to be done before going for the culprits.

"We now know who they are and what were their motives," remarked the Frontier Police chief.

Shah reminded that only 72 hours after the explosion he was very hopeful that their investigations were nearing completion. "I cannot disclose more details right now as we don't want to alert the culprits. But assured that we would go for the final push any moment now," added Frontier's top cop.

The IG, who earlier in the day briefed the Prime Minister about the bomb explosion, argued that the police have to track down the terrorists as Thursday's bomb explosion may not be the last one. "If we are unable to get them, they could strike again," he opined.

In Quetta, about 100 Afghan nationals were arrested by the law enforcement agencies in a major crackdown against them. Apparently the steps have been taken to prevent any terrorist activity in the provincial metropolis.

The operation was launched Saturday evening and by rolling of the story about 100 suspects had been arrested. The official sources, however, confirmed (?84) arrests.

More on Accused

BK2612135095 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Frontier Police, after five days of relentless efforts, have ascertained the basic facts about the main accused of the bomb blast in Peshawar on the 21st of this month. According to the police, the main accused in this act of terrorism, 'Abdol Matin, is a Persian-speaking person of Afghan origin.

The NWFP [Northwest Frontier Province] police have also ascertained evidence which says accused 'Abdol Matin and his accomplices purchased a 1974 model Toyota Corolla car of brown metallic color from bargain center in Jamrud. The accused later planted explosives and a timing device in the car and parked it in Sadr Bazar, Peshawar. Forty-two people were killed and over 100 injured in the blast. Heavy loss to property was also caused. According to evidence gathered by the police, accused 'Abdol Matin and his accomplices afterward fled from the scene in a gray color double-cabin Toyota pickup of 1989 model.

The federal government has announced a reward of 10 million rupees for the person who would provide information leading to the arrest of the accused in this gory incident.

Government Declares Afghan Consul Persona Non Grata

BK2412133795 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Government of Pakistan today declared the Afghan consul general in Peshawar, Mr. Musa Khan, as persona non grata for indulging in activities incompatible with his status. Mr. Musa Khan has been advised to leave the country within 48 hours.

Consul Regrets Expulsion

BK2612124395 Islamabad THE NATION in English 25 Dec 95 pp 1, 13

[Report by Fahd Husain]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Pakistan has declared the Afghan Consul General in Peshawar Musa Khan as persona non-grata for activities incompatible to his status. He has been advised to leave Pakistan within 48 hours.

The expulsion comes two days after the tragic bomb blast in Peshawar which killed more than sixty innocent people. Although not stated explicitly, it was suspected that the Kabul regime might have had a hand in the blast. Informed sources say there is a strong suspicion of Afghan involvement in the blast and that the new, organization replacing KHAD [Afghan secret service] may have had a hand in the sabotage. These sources admit that there is a strong connection between the Peshawar blast and the expulsion of Consul General Musa Khan who belongs to 'Abdol Rasul Sayyaf's party.

It has been learnt that the activities of Afghan diplomats are being monitored. Officials here say the blast has heightened concern about the activities of people in Afghan missions.

Pakistan has already carried out two sets of expulsions of Afghan diplomats representing the Rabbani regime in Pakistan. The earlier expulsion, which had only left a skeletal staff in the Afghan embassy in Islamabad and Consulates in Karachi and Peshawar, had been ordered a few weeks after the ransacking and burning of the Pakistani embassy in Kabul. Pakistan had held the Kabul regime responsible for the destruction of its embassy, and had demanded full compensation and a public apology. Rabbani has not complied with these demands so far and there is no Pakistani diplomatic presence in Kabul.

The Foreign Office had also stated that Pakistan would react in an appropriate manner after a full investigation.

Earlier this year Rabbani's aircraft had violated Pakistani airspace and dropped bomb inside Pakistani territory resulting in damage to a school building. Pakistan had issued a strong condemnation of this act and had warned that any future such actions would be replied in an appropriate manner.

Our Peshawar correspondent adds: The Peshawar based Afghan Consul-General, Musa Khan, who has been asked to leave Pakistan within 48 hours, has said that his expulsion was aimed at disturbing the peace mission which he (Musa) had started.

Talking to The Nation, Musa Khan said that expulsion of diplomats, will widen the gap between the two countries, adding that he was the only diplomat who had started a peace mission to bring both Pakistan and Afghanistan close to each other. "In this connection I visited twice Jalalabad which perhaps was not cited by certain elements.

"I visited Jalalabad with the permission of Pakistan authorities but even then my loyalties are doubtful for Pakistan," he said.

"If any agency of the Pakistani government can bring a slightest proof against me, I am ready for accountability," challenged the diplomat from Paktia Province of Afghanistan.

Musa Khan said that this policy of expulsion will encourage our enemies like India, Russia and others to get their nefarious designs achieved.

Musa Khan said that I am willing to render this sacrifice for the better relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, however, added that "my expulsion will annoy many people." He said that rulers of both Pakistan and Afghanistan should maintain cordial and friendly relations not hostilities. He rejected that Rabbani government was involved in bomb blasts. Musa Khan is politically affiliated with Ettehad-e Eslami.

Musa Khan who took over as Consul-General in September last, was not in good mood after he received the news of his expulsion. Only Musa Khan is going to leave Pakistan not his other family members.

Musa Khan will be leaving for Kabul via Turkhum on Monday (today) whereas the Foreign Ministry camp office in Peshawar said he will be leaving on Tuesday.

It is believed that his expulsion, has been ordered after the Prime Minister Benazir, paid a short visit to Peshawar following a disastrous bomb explosion in Peshawar on Thursday.

First Secretary, Muhammad Wali Naeemi, will be taking charge of the Afghan affairs, whereas other diplomats still working in this office are Daud, Ihsanul Haq and Muhammad Wali Babrakzai [names as published].

Two Injured as Kashmiris Protest Afghan Presence

BK2412141095 Hong Kong AFP in English 1346 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Muzaffarabad, Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, Dec 24 (AFP) — Two people were wounded when police opened fire to disperse hundreds of Kashmiri youths demonstrating against the presence of Afghans here, police and witnesses said.

The incident took place Sunday at Rawala Kot, a town near the border between Pakistani and Indian-controlled parts of Kashmir, as members of the Jammu and Kashmir National Students Federation (JKNSA) staged the protest.

Witnesses said police first lobbed tear gas shells when the demonstrators started throwing rocks at the police. The police then opened fire. At least two participants at the rally were hit and they were hospitalised, witnesses said.

The JKNSA, affiliated to the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), a group espousing independence for the whole of Kashmir, blames Afghans living in Kashmir for drug pedalling in the region.

Many of thousands of Afghans living in Pakistan-administered Kashmir reside in the Rawala Kot area. Residents say in recent months several Afghans have been caught pushing drugs.

The JKLF is one of some 30 groups involved in the separatist campaign in Indian-controlled Kashmir, which has claimed more than 17,000 lives since 1989.

Pakistan gives the campaign moral and political support, calling it a legitimate struggle for self-determination. It denies Indian charges that it provides material support to the secessionists.

Concern Expressed Over Threat to Kashmiri Leaders

BK2412143695 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has expressed deep concern at the statements of the leaders of All Parties Kashmir Hurriyat Conference about threats to their personal lives at the hands of Indian authorities. A Foreign Office spokesman, commenting on the statements, said the spate of threats and violence was preceded by the Indian Government's failure to hold fraudulent elections in the occupied Kashmir and subsequent extension of president rule in the territory. The spokesman also expressed grave concern over the new repressive tactics being pursued by Indian Government, under which the houses and properties of Kashmiri leaders have been destroyed during the past few months.

Envoy to UN Criticizes Afghanistan's Rabbani

BK2512141495 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Addressing the UN General Assembly, Pakistan's permanent representative, Mr. Ahmad Kamal, said that implementation of Islamabad Agreement was essential for peace in Afghanistan:

[Begin Kamal recording] According to the Islamabad Accord of 1993, Professor Rabbani's tenure as the transient president of Afghanistan was to end on 28 June 1994, by which date he was to complete a due electoral process which would lead to a proper representative government in Kabul. However, he had his rule extended by highly questionable means for another six months, or up to 28 December 1994. That date came and went. Prof. Rabbani then told Ambassador Mestiri that he would step down on 21 March 1995. That date, too, came and went. Prof. Rabbani reneged once again on a solemn commitment just as he had reneged earlier on his duty to complete the electoral process.

The fact that Prof. Rabbani did not take any of the measures stipulated in the Islamabad Accord suggests also that he never intended to hand over power in the first place. He was to have established an election commission and to hold elections within eight months of the Islamabad Accord, or by the end of 1993. He did not do so. He was to have also established a defense council comprising two members from each party to take possession of heavy weapons from all parties and to demilitarize Kabul and other cities of Afghanistan. He did not do so either. It is the resultant misgivings among the Afghan factions due to the nonimplementation of the Islamabad accord that have led to renewed hostilities among the warring parties in Afghanistan. [end recording]

Police Find 5 Bodies With Torture Marks in Karachi

BK2412161395 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In Karachi, police found five unidentified bodies with torture and bullet marks in Korangi area this morning. Police sources also said that a person was arrested following an encounter with a police patrolling party in the same area. The person was involved in incidents of murder and robberies. The accused was seriously injured in the encounter and later died on the way to the hospital.

Sri Lanka

Assault Launched Against LTTE in Kilinochchi

BK2312094295 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 23 Dec 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Troops in the North on Friday [22 December] launched an offensive on a Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] target at Taduwankoddi in the Kilinochchi district killing at least two rebels and wounding many others.

Troops recovered some weapons and military equipment left behind by rebels who fled carrying their dead and the wounded. Troops suffered no casualties.

Tigers opened fire with small arms and mortars on the troops advancing on Taduwankoddi, three kilometres South of Elephant Pass. Troops retaliated with small arms killing at least two Tigers, military sources in Colombo said.

Troops had returned to their defensive positions after the operation.

This was the first time the army took the battle to the Kilinochchi district since the re-taking of Jaffna city.

Kilinochchi is the district where the LTTE hierarchy led by Velupillai Prabhakaran took refuge after fleeing from Jaffna. They earlier forced Jaffna civilians to migrate to Kilinochchi and for the first time ferried them free across the lagoon to the mainland as inducement for the Kilinochchi-bound exodus.

Troops in Jaffna continued clearing buildings and other places of booby traps and landmines and taking measures to prevent terrorist infiltration.

There was a lull in fighting in the East where the Police commandos are engaged in a relentless pursuit of hit-and-run rebels.

Over 60 LTTE, 33 Army Troops Killed in Clash

BK2412122495 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Over 60 LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists were confirmed killed during a confrontation at Shanthiveli in Batticaloa yesterday when the security forces repulsed an LTTE ambush on an army patrol. One officer and 32 soldiers were killed and another officer and 33 soldiers were injured. The injured are receiving treatment at the Batticaloa Hospital and the Army Hospital in Colombo.

Meanwhile, the security forces are continuing clearing operations in the Wellikammam division, Chankanai East, Suthumalai West, Manippai and Navali in the north. The Operational Headquarters of the Defense Ministry said that the troops came across an abandoned terrorist bomb factory in Chankanai East and recovered 24 bombs of the (Posidon-2000) variety. The troops also found empty LTTE hideouts and a mortar launcher mounted on a truck. A small group of terrorists was confronted by troops in the Suthumalai area. The body of a terrorist was later recovered. The security forces suffered no casualties during the confrontation. The clearing operation is continuing.

Minister Lauds Media for 'Responsible Role'

BK1812050695 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 16 Dec 95

[Report by T. Sabaratnam — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] In a special interview to SLBC's [Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation] Sinhala service which will be broadcast over the national service at 6.45 am today as part of its 70th anniversary, Media Minister Dharmasiri Senanayake complimented the media, especially the state media, for the responsible role it played during the current crisis.

"It played its role magnificently", said Mr. Senanayake and added that had encouraged him to implement the government's free media election pledge.

He told the interviewer, SLBC's deputy director general Newton Gunaratne, that he would implement the recommendations of the four committees he appointed early this year in the coming year.

"The ensuing year is the year of implementation. I propose to implement all the recommendations", Mr. Senanayake said.

"You are criticised for being lenient and friendly to the media. What are your comments?" Mr. Gunaratne asked.

"I am aware of that criticism. I take it as a commendation. There is noting wrong in being friendly towards the media. That helps me to understand the media. That helps me to influence them to act responsibly. That also helps to win over the media to my thinking that the media should report the truth. I think my approach has yielded results", the minister responded.

Being friendly towards the media comes naturally to Mr. Senanayake. He had grown under the influence of his brother Mr. Ratna Desapriya Senanayke who made a mark in Sinhala journalism.

"I started writing when I was a little boy", he told the interviewer. "I wrote letters to the editor, little poems and articles when I was in school. While at the university I wrote economic and political articles". [passage omitted]

He said his friendly approach had stood him in good stead.

"How do you feel in being media minister?".

The Minister said: "I enjoy the job. I derive a lot of job satisfaction". He said he considered it a privilege to be in charge of broadcasting when the SLBC is celebrating its 70th anniversary.

"In a way I am also proud of the SLBC. SLBC which was known as Radio Ceylon earlier is younger to the BBC by only three years, and is older than the All India Radio by two years. The SLBC is the oldest radio station in the region", the Minister said.

Before SLBC reach its 75th anniversary free media culture will be in practice, Mr. Senanayake said.

Though some say the UNP [United National Party] government permitted the setting up of private radio and television services it was the PA [People's Alliance] government which allowed them to have their own news broadcast, the minister said.

The imposition of censorship of military news was a temporary measure necessitated by an extraordinary circumstance. "I am consulting the defence ministry about its removal", he said.

Japan Backs Efforts To Resolve 'Ethnic Problem'

BK2312131695 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Government of Japan has made a statement supporting the sincere efforts of the government headed by President Chandrika Kumaratunga to resolve the ethnic problem which has long hampered the peace and prosperity of Sri Lanka. So said the ambassador of Japan in Colombo, (Yasuo Naguchi), in a special message to mark the National Day of Japan today. He said that Japan appreciated the initiative taken by the Sri Lankan Government to propose a political package for a lasting solution of the ethnic conflict. He also noted that the traditional and friendly relations between Japan and Sri Lanka have further strengthened in various spheres in the past year. (Mr. Naguchi) further said that he was pleased that the relations in trade and investment too have made further progress.

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